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THE YEAR-BOOK

OF

THE COUNTRY;

OR,

THE FIELD, THE FOREST, AND THE FIRESIDE.

BY

WILLIAM HOWITT,

AUTHOR OF

“THE BOOK OF THE SEASONS,” “RURAL LIFE OF ENGLAND,” &c.



WITH

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P R E F A C E.

THE following work is the result of many years' delightful enjoyment of the country, and observation of life and scenery. It is intended as a companion to "The Book of the Seasons," which has so long enjoyed the favour of the public. Written in the same spirit, it has, however, been the author's endeavour to avoid, as much as possible, the ground already gone over in that volume.

"The Book of the Seasons" contains tables of botanical, entomological, and other objects of natural history and horticulture, which will not be found here: but in this volume is comprised an abundance of matter illustrative of the pleasures and pursuits of human life in the country

—in the Field, the Forest, and by the Fireside—which will not be found in that volume. The two works must go together to complete the round of subjects on which they treat.

Some few articles have appeared in a partial medium of circulation, but the whole have been written with the design of their present systematic arrangement, and will be new to the reader in general.

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THE
COUNTRY YEAR-BOOK;
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JANUARY.

I PROPOSE to divide this volume into the twelve sections into which the year itself is divided, and in the opening of each to trace some of the natural features of the season. The articles which will follow, whether adapted to the field or the fireside, will also bear some relation to the season and the country. But expressly as regards the opening article of each month, it is my object

to translate the reader to the country itself. Being engaged, as so many of us are, in absorbing avocations, we are apt to forget what lies, as an offered gift from God, like the sunrise and the free sweet airs of heaven, in the heart of the approaching weeks; but when we are duly premonished of these, we doubly enjoy them in anticipation and reality.

No revolutions in this restless world of ours have been more complete than the revolutions in our seasons. Those old stern winters that we remember in our youth as the settled and ordinary ones, are now become the rare exceptions. Occasionally, however, the exception comes as if Winter would show us some of his old characteristics. We get a sharp specimen of what he can and may do; and if we regard the health of society and of vegetation, we shall not complain if frosts and snows come upon us in all that strength and abundance which so many of us can remember. Splendid as a summer may be, the abundance of it is not always in proportion to the amount of clear skies and sunshine. Every one may call to mind, who had a garden in 1846, how unhealthy was the vegetation. Never did such universal blight infect and curdle up the foliage of fruit-trees; never was the crop of all kinds of fruit, except grapes, so deficient, and never was the fruit itself so infected by insects. There can be no doubt but that a good old-fashioned winter, with frosts that penetrate deep into the soil, and destroy this insect life, would restore vegetation to its purest vigour, and probably prepare the earth to receive the potato into its bosom with a renovated influence.

But with an old-fashioned winter we have most imperative need of old-fashioned virtues. The poor of England are ill-prepared for such a visitation; the poor of Ireland far worse. Famine and rags need no aggravation of frost. The scenes that for the last several years have

been witnessed in Ireland have been terrible—history has nothing more appalling to exhibit. It is calculated that two millions of people, young and old, have perished of famine and its attendant fever. It has required all the wisdom and all the goodness of the United Kingdom to keep alive any of that wretched population. To think only of a savage winter falling on a nation in such a condition! With old-fashioned winters, then, we must open our hearts to an old-fashioned hospitality and sympathy with the suffering. We must reflect, that though a kind Providence generally “tempers the wind to the shorn lamb,” yet there may come a conjunction of circumstances so peculiar as to require sharp agencies at a moment when humanity seems least prepared for them. It is for us then to put forth energies and virtues befitting the occasion. It is for us to open our hearts, our hands, our store-rooms, and our wardrobes, and emulate each other in sheltering and strengthening our poorer sisters and brothers during that keen dispensation which is to issue in blessings and abundance to us all. If frosts and snows come, then let us resolve that active kindness and liberal aid to the ill-prepared shall come too. Let us pay down cheerfully our part of the price which a coming year of health and plenty will be so worthy of. With such a resolve, the most tender of us may look forward to winter without apprehension, and may even revel in the recollection of the grand old winters of years ago.

And who does not remember, even with delight, the stern long winters of twenty or thirty years ago—when early in November the snows began to fall; when they came down first thinly dancing in minute flakes, then larger, heavier, more abundant, till the whole air was dark with them, and the earth was lost in the soft covering, and was shrouded in a wonderful stillness?—when as the season

advanced, day after day, the snowy deluge still descended; the streets were filled, the gardens and shrubberies were several feet deep with snow, and it lay on the shrubs in vast masses, and covered all the roofs of houses with actual avalanches, that in the first gleam of sunshine came sweeping down, threatening to bury the passer-by beneath?—when men with straw bands round their ankles were aloft on houses, shovelling down the dazzling burden, lest it should suddenly melt, and, filling spout and gutter, penetrate under the tiles into the houses; when below, others were cutting pathways to your doors, and you had to march between huge white walls from your dwelling to the highway?—when all cattle and sheep were congregated in the straw-yard, in warmly-sheltered paddocks, and in still warmer stalls and stables, lest they should be smothered in the plentiful snows?—when there was a noise of straw-cutting and turnip-cutting in the farm-yards, mingled with the sound of flails?—when, in fact, all domestic life was gathered round the house at noon, and was doubly domesticated?—when the pigeons and the fowls flew down to the bounteous barn-door, and were joined by scores of the fowls of heaven, whose “pantry-doors were locked and the key lost?”—when far and near the whole landscape lay under one white sheet, on which the black swarm of rooks and starlings looked doubly black, as a momentary clearness of sky gave you a view abroad?—when the lanes and highways were full, with drifts here and there perhaps twenty feet deep, and tossed by the winds into grand or fantastic features, swelling over hedge-tops, and even over trees and rocks, and there were no snow-ploughs, as on the continent, attended by troops of shovel-armed men, going constantly to and fro to keep all great roads clear?—when, therefore, the mails were stopped, the carriers’ carts, which were anxiously looked for, bringing work and food from the towns, were also frost-bound, and there were dismal

stories circulating round all firesides of travellers lost in the great drifts on the wild moorlands, and of wanderers that had perished there or in deep snow-laden woods?

When, anon, the snows ceased, and there came out skies blue as *lapis lazuli*, and the winds began to pipe shrewd and shrill, tossing the light surface of the snow in fine spray, and then binding the whole down in hardness that admitted you to walk on it, then was it a new and wonderful feeling to go over hedge-tops and across deep valleys, now filled and levelled up, the frozen mass crunching under your feet, to find only the rivers showing themselves by their wintry hues, amid the trees and rocks. Then sped abroad the sportsman with eager desire; and the poor hare, and the snipe, and woodcock, and wild-duck were roused from their coverts, and the sides of the wintry streams. Then were the visitors from the north, the redwings, thrushes, and fieldfares brought down by thousands, and for weeks and months the wintry covering of frozen snow would lie on the earth, the keenest winds sweeping over it, and gradually the roads becoming well tracked and dingy, the shepherd feeding his flocks out in the fields and plains with hay and corn and turnips; and all Heaven's creatures of wood, and wild, and air, becoming tame, and fearless of the worst that men could do to them, after the hardships which their mother Nature had inflicted on them. Then came the robin to the window for his morning's meal, and often took up his abode in the chambers of hospitable houses, and in churches, where on Sundays he joined in the hymn of thanksgiving from the lofty beam, or capital of the tall column.

Such were the winters of old, and of them many wild stories yet circulate round the fireside in moorland and mountain districts. Such were those which Hogg, the Ettrick Shepherd, describes when his sheep were buried

beneath the snows in the hollows of the hills, and he had to hunt them with his dog through the darkness of the night, and the treacherous and blinding snows. Such snows *used* to be. Of late years they have been seldom seen in this country, as many believe, from the increase of population, and consequently increased number of fires, as well as the greater warmth of the whole surface of the land, from draining, and from the diminution of the woods. Be that as it may, such winters were once common, and are now rare. The skate-makers, and all sellers of *skates*, except fishmongers, complain. Then the frost used to continue commonly till March; and the proverb was, that as the days lengthened the cold strengthened, and by a bold figure it was said that January froze the pot over the fire. Yet, spite of this, people in the country enjoyed themselves wonderfully. There were sliding, skating, shooting, and snowballing. In this country, those little sledges represented in the woodcuts of my "Germany," never seem to have prevailed, but have always obtained in all countries from Germany to Lapland. The boys flew—and still do fly—down hills on them with the speed of birds, and with wonderful delight. The grown-up people also enjoy themselves equally in their sledges, drawn by horses covered with little bells. In all the countries where snows abound and continue for a long time, whether in Europe or America, sledging parties are often attended with much splendour, consisting of a numerous train of magnificent sledges, with fine horses, ringing gaily their bells; ladies and gentlemen wrapped in furs, and full of gaiety, attended by outriders cracking their whips with astounding clamour, and parading through the towns on their setting out, and also on their return, attended by torch-bearers. These form the pleasures of the day, with dancing, and sport, and coffee-drinking, at the places to

which they drive, and they are followed in the evening by balls and masquerades.

In this country, the pleasures of the day are principally enjoyed by the sportsmen in the country, who are everywhere full of activity; and the *feræ naturæ* shot, hunted, trapped, and snared in all sorts of ways. In such sports do the country people soon forget the rigour of the season, and the glow of health and pleasure lives in every vein. In towns, walking by day is a bracing and delightful exercise; but it is with the closing evening that in towns and cities the reign of enjoyment begins. Then blazes out the bright fire of the British hearth; then congregate around it the groups from places of business, sons, and brothers, and husbands bringing the news of the day. Then the wife and sister open the piano, and song and gay conversation fill up the measure of domestic bliss. Then assembles the invited party; then the theatre and concert unfold their charms, and wonders, and harmonies; and men think no more of what weather is without, than they do of the cage of Bajazet or the conquests of Tamerlane.

And even in the wintry world without, the soul of the coming year bursts through the power of frost, and amid the piles of snow swell buds of the future summer, and blow flowers of rare beauty. It is one of the miracles of this world, one of the characteristics of a wonderful and all-good Creator, that He has left no season without a witness of his living presence. He has planted even in the iron depth of winter the whole vegetable life of the future summer. Like the germs of faith and hope in the heart of man, which can never fail, the bud swells on the bough, the corn springs from the frozen earth, bearing in them, or at their root, every leaf, every flower, every

grain and fruit, which are to enrich the earth, and sustain the life of the globe.

It were too long for us here to enumerate all the flowers, and coming buds, and insects, of January; for these we refer to "The Book of the Seasons;" but we may notice the *helleborus niger*, or Christmas rose, which expands its handsome white chalice, undaunted by the sharpest frosts, and blooms amid overwhelming wreaths of snow. In the valleys of the Alps the ground is often covered with these beautiful flowers, as with another snow, for miles. Before the month is out, comes peeping forth that dear favourite and poetical old friend—the snowdrop! The white aconites, and the white-leaved coltsfoot, flower in mild seasons, as well as the round-headed cyclamen; and in the house, the changeable-flowered hydrangea; and the hyacinths, in their green glasses, are making our windows and mantelpieces beautiful. In woods, and hedges, and banks, numbers of insects begin to recommence active life, and especially under moss and the bark of trees; and the winter-moths, and the early moth, *cheimatobia vulgaris*, and *cheimatobia rupicapra*, are already abroad in warm rooms, about hedges, pales, and old houses.

Besides these, every advancing day presents us with some fresh and cheering symptom of spring. The hedge-sparrow and the thrush begin to sing; the wren pipes its perennial lay; the golden-crested wren is often seen; the blackbird whistles, linnets congregate, young lambs appear! The house-sparrow, that bold and familiar fellow, who has been silent for some time, again renews his brisk chirping; and various strange and beautiful birds, as the wild swan and the snowflake, visitors from polar regions, are passing to and fro, as if they expected a summons

from the invisible spirit of nature, to retrace their flight to their native countries.

Such are the attributes of a wintry January; but these are now rare; and a green and soft month is our more ordinary allotment. Be it what it may, the deadness of the year is past, and life, and hope, and love, live in it, and call us to enjoy, and bless God, who planteth flowers in the very heart of winter, and causes the spirit to rejoice in the heart of frost, and sends the signs of his paternal affection even amid his tempests—who “causes the stork to know her appointed time; and the crane, and the turtle, and the swallow to observe the time of their coming.”

HOAR-FROST.

What dream of beauty ever equall'd this!
What bands of fairyland have issued forth,
With all the foliage of the abundant north,
With imagery from the realms of bliss!
What visions of my boyhood do I miss
That here are not restored? All splendours pure,
All loveliness, all graces that allure—
Shapes that amaze—a paradise that is,
Yet was not, will not in few moments be—
Glory from nakedness, that playfully
Mimics with passing life each summer boon,
Clothing the ground, replenishing the tree;
Weaving arch, bower, and radiant festoon,
Still as a dream, and like a dream to flee.

THE FARMER'S DAUGHTER.

There are no places in the country whither this season so naturally conducts you as to farm-houses. There is a world of buxom beauty flourishing in the shades of the country. But, beware! Farm-houses are dangerous places. As you are thinking only of sheep or of curds, you may be suddenly shot through by a pair of bright eyes, and melted away in a bewitching smile that you

never dreamt of till the mischief was done. In towns, and theatres, and thronged assemblies of the rich and the titled fair, you are on your guard; you know what you are exposed to, and put on your breastplate, and pass through the most deadly onslaught of beauty safe and sound. But in those sylvan retreats, dreaming of nightingales, and hearing only the lowing of oxen, you are taken by surprise. Out steps a fair creature, crosses a glade, springs a stile; you start—you stand, lost in wonder and astonished admiration; you take out your tablets to write a sonnet on the return of the nymphs and dryads to earth, when up comes John Tompkins, and says, “It’s only the farmer’s daughter!”

“What! have farmers such daughters now-a-days?” Yes, I tell you they have such daughters—those farm-houses are dangerous places. Let no man with a poetical imagination, which is but another name for a very tindery heart, flatter himself with fancies of the calm delights of the country—with the serene idea of sitting with the farmer in his old-fashioned chimney-corner, and hearing him talk of corn and mutton—of joining him in the pensive pleasures of a pipe and brown jug of October—of listening to the gossip of the comfortable farmer’s wife, of the parson and his family, of his sermons and his tenth pig, over a fragrant cup of young hyson, or lapped in the delicious luxuries of custards and whipt-creams—in walks a fairy vision of wondrous witchery, and with a curtsy and a smile, of most winning and mysterious magic, takes her seat just opposite.

It is the Farmer’s Daughter! a lively creature of eighteen. Fair as the lily—fresh as May-dew—rosy as the rose itself—graceful as the peacock perched on the pales there by the windows—sweet as a posy of violets and “clove-gillivers”—modest as early morning, and

amiable as your own idea of Desdemona, or Gertrude of Wyoming.

You are lost! It's all over with you. I would not give an empty filbert or a frog-bitten strawberry for your peace of mind, if that glittering creature be not as pitiful as she is fair. And that comes of going into the country, out of the way of vanity and temptation, and fancying farm-houses only nice old-fashioned places of old-fashioned contentment.

Ay, many a one has found to his sorrow what trusting himself amongst hand-churns and rows of bee-hives has cost him. His resolutions of bachelor independence have been whirled round and round, and resolved themselves into melting butter: he has been stung by the queen-bee in the eye, and has felt all over pangs and twinges, as if the whole swarm had got into his bosom. Then has come a desperate liking to that part of the country; the taking that neat cottage just out of the village, with its honeysuckle porch, and willow arbour by the brook; the sauntering down the footpath that leads past the farm of a summer's evening, with a book of poetry in the hand—the seat on the stile at the bottom of the wood—the sudden looking up. How sweet that farm-house *does* look! What fine old trees those are about it! And that dear little window in the old gable, with its open casement and the diamond panes. And oh! surely! yes—that *is* Anne herself, and I think she is looking this way!

Then follow the sweetest walks down by the mill—the sweetest moonlight leaps over the sunk fence at the bottom of the garden—the most heavenly wanderings along that old quince walk. Such vows!—such poetry of passion!—such hopes and promises of felicity; and then the old farmer looks over the hedge and says, “Who's there?”

There, this is a pretty go! Off goes Anne like the spirit of a young lamplighter up the garden, through the house, up the stairs at three bounds, and there she is locked and bolted in that dear little chamber, with the little diamond window in the old gable. She has sunk into a chair—it is a very soft one, cushioned comfortably all round, seat, back, and elbows—and very wet is that white cambric handkerchief which she holds to her eyes.

But where is Captain Jenkinson? Oh, he's there! and he's too bold and too true a lover to sneak or fly. There they stand, face to face, in the moonlight, the tall, thin, Captain Jenkinson, and the tall, stout, farmer Field, with his huge striped waistcoat, ready to burst with hurry and indignation, and his great stick in his hand.

“What! is that you, captain? My eye! What! was that you a-talking to our Anne?”

“Yes, friend Field, it is I—it is the captain that was talking to your adorable Anne! and here I am ready to marry her with your consent, for never shall woman be my wife but your charming Anne!”

How that great elephant of a farmer stands lifting up his face, and laughing in the moonlight! How that “fair round *corporation* with good capon lined”—(good Shakespeare, pardon our verbal variation in this quotation, in courtesy to the delicacy of modern phrases)—how those herculean limbs do shake with laughter! But now, as the tears stream down his face, he squeezes the youth's hand, and says—“Who could have thought it, captain, eh? Ha! ha! Well, we're all young and foolish once in our lives: but come! no more on't—it won't do, captain; it won't do!”

“Won't do! won't do? Why shouldn't it do, farmer; why shouldn't it do?”

“Why becós it won't, and that's why. A captain

and old farmer Field's lass—ha, ha! What will Lady Jenkinson say, eh? What 'ull that half-a-dozen of old guardians say, eh? The Honourable Captain Jenkinson and the daughter of old farmer Field! What'll they say, eh? Say, I'm a cunning old codger: say I've trapped you, belike. No, no—they shan't say so, not a man-jack of 'em; not one of the breed, seed, and generation of 'em shall say old farmer Field palmed his daughter off on a gentleman for his houses and lands. No, Anne's a tight lass, and John Wright will come at the right time; and when you're married to my Lady Fitzsomebody, and Anne's got the right man, come down, captain, and kill us a pheasant, and set up your horses and your dogs here, and we'll have a regular merry do, and another good laugh at our youthful follies!"

But all won't do. The captain vows he'll shoot all the old guardians of a row, and tell his mother she may shoot him if they make any opposition; and the very same night he sticks a note on the end of his fishing-rod, and taps with it at Anne's little window, with the diamond panes, in the old gable; and Anne, jumping from the easy chair, looks out, seizes the paper, clasps her hands, casts down a most affectionate but inconsolable look, and sighs an eternal adieu!—then, flying to read the note, finds the captain vowing that "she may cheer up, all *shall* go right, or that he will manfully drown himself in the mill-dam."

Now, there is a pretty situation of affairs! and all through incautiously wandering into the country of a summer's evening, and getting into one of these old-fashioned farm-houses. It would serve them all right to leave them in their trouble. It might act as a warning to others, and place the dangers of the country in their genuine light. But as the captain would be almost certain to drown himself in the mill-dam, he is so desperate, and then there must be a coroner's inquest, and we might, at a very in-

convenient moment, be called up to serve upon it, we will for this once let things pass—all *shall* be right. The guardians relent because they can't help themselves; Lady Jenkinson bounces a good deal, but, like all bodies of a certain specific gravity, she comes down again. The adorable Anne is not drowned in her own pocket handkerchief, though she has been very near it; and the *Times* announces that the Honourable Charles Jenkinson, of the Light-Dragoons, was married on the 7th instant to Anne Louisa, the only daughter of Burley Field, Esq., of Sycamore Grange, Salop.

Merciful as we have been to this young and handsome couple, we think we have not failed to indicate dangers of no trivial description that haunt the bush in England, though there be no lions; dangers out of which others may not probably so easily come; for, without a joke, the farmer's daughter, in the bloom of beauty, is not to be carelessly approached. She can sing like a syren, and is as dangerous as Circe in her enchanted island.

It is not to be inferred, however, that all farmers' daughters are like Anne Field. Plentifully as Providence has scattered beauty and good sense through our farms and granges, both these and other good things are given with a difference. There are such things amongst farmers' daughters as ranks, fortunes, educations, dispositions, abilities, and tastes, in as much variety as any lover of variety can desire. There are farmers of all sorts, from Prince Albert to the man of twenty acres; and of course there are farmers' daughters of as many degrees. The princesses of England are farmers' daughters. There is a large class of gentleman-farmers—men of estates and large capitals, who farm their two or three thousand acres, like some of the great corn-farmers of Northumberland; live in noble large houses, and keep their carriages and livery-servants. Of course, the daugh-

ters of these, and such as these, are educated just the same, and have all the same habits and manners as any other young ladies. It is neither Cobbett nor any other contemners of boarding-schools, and such "skimmy-dish things," that will persuade these damsels to leave the carriage for the tax-cart, the piano for the spinning-wheel, nor the fashionable novel for the cook's oracle. They will "stand by their order" as stoutly as Lord Grey himself.

Yet, if anybody wishes to see the buxom, but housewifely, farmer's daughter, that is not afraid "to do a hand's-char"—that can scour a pail, make a cheese, churn your butter, fresh as the day and golden as the crowflower on the lea—can make the house look so clean and cheery, that the very cat purrs on the hearth, and the goldfinch sings at the door-cheek the more blithely for it—can throw up a haycock, or go to market, as well as her grandmother did; why, there are plenty of such lasses yet, spite of all the crinkum-crankums and fine-fingeredness of modern fashion. Haven't you seen such, north and south? Haven't you met them on single horses, or on pillions, on market-days, in Devon and in Cornwall? Haven't you danced with them, on Christmas-eves, in Derbyshire or Durham?

There are some specimens of human nature that not all the fashions or follies of any age can alter or make new-fashioned. They are born old-fashioned. They have an old head on young shoulders, and they can't help it if they would. You might as soon turn a wheelbarrow into a chariot, or an ass into an Arabian steed. There is Dolly Cowcabbage, now, what can you make of her? Her father farms eighty acres, and milks half-a-dozen cows. He has nobody but her; and he has saved a pretty lot of money. Dolly knows of it too. Her mother died when she was only about fourteen; and Dolly, from that day, began to be her father's little maid; left her play on the

village-green, and village playfellows, and began to look full of care. She began to reap, and work, and cook, and milk, and make cheese. It is many a year since she has done all those things entirely for the house. Those who know her say, that "she has not thriven an inch in height" since that day, but she has grown in bulk. She is like a young oak that got a shock from a thunderbolt in its youth, or had its leading branch switched off by some Jerry Diddle or other as he went past to plough, and has ever since been stunted, and has run all to stem. She is "a little runting thing," the farmers say: a little stout-built, plodding woman, with a small, round, rosy face. She is generally to be seen with a linsey-woolsey petticoat, a short striped bed-gown or kirtle, and a greenish-brownish kerchief carefully placed on her bosom. She is scouring pails with a wisp of straw and wet sand, and rearing them on a stone bench to dry and sweeten; or she is calling her cows up, by blowing on a long horn; or calling her father and the men to their meals, out of the distant fields, by knocking with a pebble on a pail-bottom. She is coming out of the fold-yard with a milkpail on her head, or she is seated by the clean hearth, busy with her needle, making a pillow-case to hold the feathers she has saved.

Such is Dolly Cowcabbage. She has had offers: men know what's what, though it be in a homely guise; but she only gives a quiet smile, and always says, "No! I shall never marry while father lives." Those who don't like "sour grapes" begin now to say—"Marry! no! Doll 'ull never marry; there always was an old look about her; there's the old maid written all over her—anybody may see that with half an eye; why, and she's thirty now, at least."

But Dolly knows what she knows. There is a homely, close, plodding sort of a chap, that lives not far off—Tim

Whetstone. He farms his fifty acres of his own. He has nobody in the house with him but an old woman, his housekeeper, who is as deaf as a bolt, and has a hundred and thirty guineas, of old gold, wrapped in an old stocking, and put into a dusty beehive that stands on her bed's head. Tim knows of that too, though the old woman thinks nobody knows of it. She hath neither kith nor kin, and when the lumbago twinges her, as they sit by the fire, she often says—"Tim, lad, I shall not trouble thee long, and then what two or three old traps I have 'ull be thine."

Tim is certain, before long, to find honey in the old hive; and he has been seen, sly as he is, more than once coming over the fields, in the dusk of the evening, in a very direct line towards old Farmer Cowcabbage's house. *He* says it was only to seek a lamb that he had missed. But when somebody asked him if it were the same lamb that he was looking after so earnestly in church last Sunday, Tim blushed, and said—"All fools think other people like themselves," and so went away.

If the old woman should drop off, I should not be very much surprised to see those two farms thrown into one, and old Samuel Cowcabbage having a bed set up in the parlour at Tim's. In the mean time, Dolly goes to market with her maund* of butter on her arm as regularly as Saturday comes. She makes eighteen ounces to the pound, and will have the topmost price. Beautiful cream cheeses, too, Dolly manufactures; and if any one attempts to beat her down in her price, Dolly is just as quiet, as firm, as smiling, and as ready with her "No," as she was to her sweethearts. If I were to prophesy, it would be that Dolly will marry, and have half-a-dozen children yet, as sturdy and as plodding as Tim and herself; but there is no knowing. She tells Tim they are very well off as they are—she can wait;

* A basket with two lids.

and the truth of the matter is, that they have kept company these ten years already.

A very different damsel is Miss Nancy Farley. She is the Farmer's Daughter in quite another style. Nancy's father is a farmer of the rough old school. He has none of the picturesque, or the old-fashioned sentimentality about him. He is a big, boorish, loud-talking, work-driving fellow, that is neither noted for his neatness in house, nor farm, nor person; for his knowledge, nor his management. He is just one of those who rough it along, get a crop though there are plenty of weeds in it; have the miller complaining that their wheat is not winnowed clean, and the butcher that their sheep died but badly; yet, that get along, pay their rent, lay something up, and, by mere dint of a hard face, a hard hand, and a hard conscience, do as well and better than scores.

Nancy's father farms his two hundred acres, and yet there is a slovenly look about his premises; and Nancy has grown up pretty much as she pleased. As a girl, she romped and climbed and played with the lads of the village. She swung on gates and rode on donkeys. When ten or twelve years old, she could ride bare-back and astride, with a horse to water, or to the blacksmith's shop. She thrashed the dogs, fetched in the eggs, suckled the calves, and then mounted on the wall of the garden, with her long chestnut hair hanging wild on her shoulders, and a raw carrot in her hand, which she was either ready to devour or to throw at any urchin that came in sight.

Such was Miss Nancy Farley in those days; but her only appellations then were Nan and Nance. Nance Farley was the true name of the wild and fearless creature. But Nance was sent for by an aunt to a distance; she was away five years; she was at length almost forgotten, and only remembered when it was necessary to call any girl as "wild as Nance Farley." When, lo! she made her

appearance again; and great was the wonder. Could this be the gipsyish, unkempt, and graceless Nance Farley? This bright and buxom young lady in the black hat and blue riding-habit? This fine young creature, with a shape like a queen and eyes like diamonds? Yes, sure enough it was she—now Miss Nancy Farley indeed.

Miss Nancy's aunt had determined that she should have what is called "a bringing-up." She had sent her to a boarding-school; and whatever were Miss Nancy's accomplishments, it was clear enough that she was one of the very handsomest women that had ever set foot in the parish. The store of health and vigour that she had laid up in her tom-boy days might be seen in her elastic step and cheek—fresh as the cheek of morning itself.

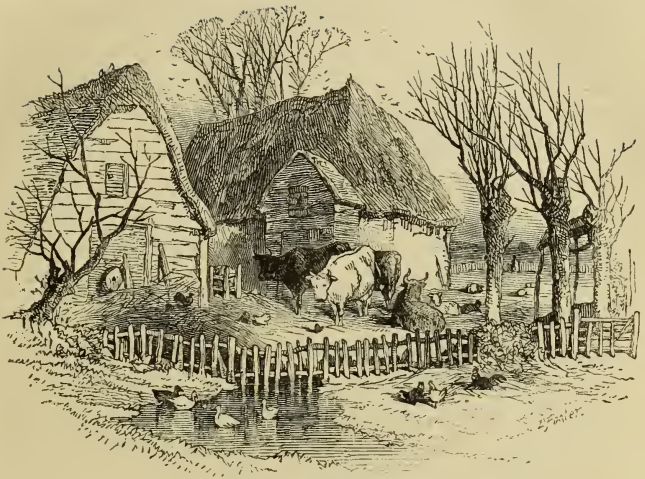
She was something above the middle size, of a beautiful figure, and a liveliness of motion that turned all eyes upon her. Her features were extremely fine, and her face had a mixture of life, archness, freedom, and fun in it, that was especially attractive, and especially dangerous to look upon. Her eyes were of half-a-dozen different colours—if half-a-dozen different people might be believed; but, in truth, they were of some dark colour that was neither black, nor brown, nor grey, nor hazel; but one thing was certain, they were most speaking, and laughing, and beautiful eyes, and those long, flying locks were now, by some gracious metamorphosis, converted into a head of hair that was of the richest auburn, and was full enough of a sunny light to dazzle a troop of beholders.

Miss Nancy had enough of the old leaven in her to distinguish her from the general run of ladies, with their staid and quiet demeanour. She was altogether a dashing woman. She rode a beautiful light chestnut mare with a switch tail; and her brother Ben, who was now grown up, with the ambition of cutting a figure as a gay blade of a

farmer, was generally her cavalier. She hunted, and cleared gates and ditches to universal amazement. Everybody was asking—"Who is that handsome girl that rides like an Arab?" Miss Nancy danced, and played, and sung; she had a wit as ready as her looks were sweet, and all the hearts of the young farmers round were giddy with surprise and delight. Miss Nancy was not of a temper to hide herself in the shade, or to shun admiration. She was at the races, at the fair, at the ball; and everywhere she had about her a crowd of admirers, that were ready to eat one another with envy and jealousy. The young squire cast his eyes upon her, and lost no time in commencing a warm flirtation; but Nancy knew that she could not catch him as a husband, he was too much a man of the world for that; and she took care that he should not catch her. Yet she was politic enough to parade his attentions whenever he came in the way, and might be seen at the market-inn window, or occasionally on the road from church, laughing and chatting with him in a fashion that stirred the very gall of her humbler wooers. The gay young gentleman-farmer, the rich miller, the smart grazier, the popular lawyer of the county town, were all ready to fight for her; nay, the old steward, who was nearly as rich as the squire himself, and was old enough to be her father, offered to make a settlement upon her that filled her father with delight.

"Take him, Nance, lass, take him," he cried; "thy beauty *has* made thy fortune, that it has. Never a woman of our family was ever worth a hundredth part of that money."

But Miss Nancy had a younger and handsomer husband in view; and Miss Nancy is Miss Nancy no longer: she has married the colonel of a marching regiment, and is at this moment the most dashing and admired lady of a great military circle in the garrison town of ——.



FEBRUARY.

FEBRUARY, when it is in keeping with its ancient character, is a month of wet and thaw. But this presupposes a winter of severity and much snow. The giving way of frost and the melting of snow make February necessarily a wet season—a time of floods and damps. But of late years our winters have been so open and mild, that it is difficult to recognise any of the ancient features of our winter months. We incline to regard the old severe winters and fine early springs as the most healthy, and, according to our phraseology, *seasonable*. It may seem to many that severity of winter, superadded to the poverty of vast masses of our fellow-creatures, is not in

full accordance with the doctrines that have been taught, and that we confidently teach again, of the tender mercies of God over all his works. But we believe that his tender mercies are just as clearly discernible in the midst of his severity as in his most indulgent dispensations. We firmly believe, that out of temporary distress will arise, and is meant to arise, many future and permanent blessings, that will far outbalance all the calamity of the time. Do not the very terrors of winter bring to notice the poverty and distress around us? Do they not thus tend to call forth the better feelings of our nature—feelings of brotherhood and sympathy? Have we not of late years seen this strikingly manifested in the case of Ireland? The potato crop failed. The people starved and perished. Misery spread abroad there over moor and mountain; but did not this misery arouse our government to resolve on a better and a safer state of things? Did it not sound a solemn warning against a whole people being left in a state of pauperism, with half their best lands lying uncultivated? Was not private as well as public benevolence called forth in a noble manner? Were we not more ready to acknowledge that, whatever were our differences of blood, of politics, or religion, we were still brethren; that let misfortune fall on any part of our fellowmen, and the voice of the common Father would still awake in us with a divine power, and arouse us to acknowledge, by deeds of kindness, that we are all akin, and all bound together by the invisible mystery of love? If we are not thus affected, thus re-awakened to nobler and more affectionate sentiments, winters and sorrows are sent to us in vain. If these things are not taught us by a wise Providence, severe but fatherly in his severity to us all, then we are ourselves to blame, and can no longer accuse Providence without insulting him.

But in the dispensations of blight and the bitterness of past seasons we feel confidently that a foundation is laid of great and enduring results of human prosperity and comfort in these kingdoms. And however much or little these causes may have operated in our individual bosoms, we may rest assured that in the bosom of the earth the power of frost will not have fallen abortively : it is the great agent of coming beauty and plenty ; by it the soil is lightened, and the stores of insect life that lie in it are destroyed. We have seen after mild winters the whole vegetation filled with it in the shape of blight. The leaves of the fruit-trees have come out curly and shrivelled. In almost every apple and pear there has been an insect. On many fruit-trees the race of caterpillars has been so numerous that the whole of the foliage has been devoured, leaving the strange aspect of a mere network of the fibres of the leaves. All this, too, requires a severe winter to rectify. After it, the process of vegetation becomes more perfect, and we then expect to find all nature in the coming year prepared to discharge its functions magnificently.

If, under such circumstances then, February comes in its old shape, as a month of thaw and wet, and much dreariness, we can look forward from its homely features to its pleasant results. It becomes the month of anticipation ! The inhabitants of the continent regard it thus, and express the feeling in their carnivals by all sorts of merriments and gaieties. To us, if in a more sober mood, still it is the month of anticipation. It is the month of the snowdrop ! The sap is stirring in the trees ; the buds are swelling ; green things are beginning to peep from the earth beneath warm hedge-sides and on woodland banks, and we actually begin to be impatient for the violets and the primroses of March. In Germany it is

curious to see people of all ages, the old and grave philosopher as well as the gay-hearted child, all turning out to hunt under warm forest-sides for the earliest violets.

In our house-windows and on our chimney-pieces blossom hyacinths. The crocus, the Dutch and Florentine tulips, again make gay our rooms. In gardens there are hepaticas in bloom; and before it goes out come forth the vernal crocus, various hellebores, the Japan quince, the fragrant coltsfoot, the bulbocodium, and the cornelian cherry. On the heaths the gorse often puts forth its golden bloom, and the yew-tree flowers. Various insects issue from their winter retreats, where they so completely buried themselves that they seemed to have vanished entirely from the world. How completely do all the gay races of moths and butterflies, of beetles and flies, of wasps and bees, of glittering dragon-flies, the chaffer and the grasshopper, disappear in winter, not only from our view but our thoughts also. But now they will speedily begin to reappear in all their successive hosts; and in mild days before the month is out, we shall witness the happy dance of gnats celebrating, in many an artistic sweep, the return of life, light, and beauty.

And away are winging northward all the tribes of anas, anser, cygnus, and mergus; of geese, swans, ducks, and mews, that love the hyperborean latitudes; but find them, for even themselves, too intense in the depth of winter; find all their food buried in the trackless snows of Lapland, Norway, or Russia. These, with divers, godwits, the mountain-finch, the redwing thrush, and the fieldfares, are all preparing to bid us adieu for another year, though the two latter will be the last to depart. Every symptom of the coming year is one of life and hope. The winter is a season of distress, not only to the nobler race of man, but to all animated creatures. Game and wildfowl of

every species is tamed by its rigour, and destroyed by thousands by man. The markets are crowded with all sorts of wild ducks, hares, plovers, woodcocks, and snipes, and in severe years often at singularly low prices. In the winter of 1846-7, there were in the London market, hares at one shilling each, wild ducks for two shillings the brace, and snipes for fourpence each. In Devonshire snipes were so numerous as to be sold at one halfpenny each.

But with February the season of distress is generally nearly over. By the surviving creatures of the field it will soon be forgotten; and man, the lord of the world, may look forward to the opening year wiser and better, we will trust, from the lessons of the past, made more aware of his utter dependence on the Great Ruler of the Universe, and of his need of love and sympathy for his brother man. The heart of the poet already begins to work in us, and to exclaim—

To-morrow to fresh fields and pastures new!

How full of interest is the summary of field life with which we close this article. Various signs of returning spring occur at different times in February. The wood-lark, one of our earliest and sweetest songsters, often begins his note at the very entrance of the month; the thrush now commences his song; and tomtits are seen hanging on the eaves of barns and thatched outhouses, particularly if the weather be snowy and severe; rooks now revisit their breeding trees, and arrange the stations of their future nests. The harsh, loud voice of the missel-thrush is now heard towards the end of the month; and, if the weather be mild, the hedge-sparrow renews its chirping note; turkey-cocks now strut and gobble; partridges begin to pair; the house-pigeon has young; field-cricketts open their holes, and owls hoot; gnats play about,

and insects swarm under sunny hedges; the stone-curlew clamours, and frogs croak. By the end of February, the raven, too, generally lays its eggs, and begins to sit. About this time the green woodpecker is heard in the woods making a loud noise; the elder-tree discloses its flower-buds; the catkins of the hazel become very conspicuous in the hedges; young leaves are budding on the gooseberries and currants about the end of the month.

The winter, in fact, spite of occasional frosts and frowns, is over and gone, and the voice of the turtle and the singing-bird is heard once more in our land. We are reminded of that fine passage in the Psalms:—"He giveth snow like wool; he scattereth the hoar-frost like ashes. He casteth forth his ice like morsels; who can stand before his cold? He sendeth out his word, and melteth them; he causeth his wind to blow, and the waters flow."

FEBRUARY WEATHER.

Hold! hold! what would these endless clouds be at!
 These five days it has been but pour—pour—pour;
 Methinks that it would float the ark once more
 From its old station on Mount Ararat.
 Oh! 'tis a pleasant time for cloak and hat;
 And for umbrellas, laid in dozens by,
 That as one drops, another may be dry;
 For cork-soled shoes, stilts, oil-case, and all that.
 Out, cat! why turn thy back upon the fire?
 We've rain enough, I say! We'll try again
 This weather-glass:—sweet finger, pray mount higher!
 Down!—down it goes!—oh, mercy!—yet more rain?
 Shall the world drown!—no dry spot left upon it,
 And fishes swim where now I pen this sonnet!

OLD ENGLISH CARNIVAL BEFORE LENT—A PLEA FOR HOLIDAYS.

[AUTHOR'S *Study*. Enter FRIEND.]

FRIEND.—What! I declare! actually working when our wiser ancestors made merry! I want once more to see us

indulging in the fashions of the good old times. Come, turn out, and let us claim our holidays, as we did when boys.

AUTHOR.—Holidays! Why, do such things exist?—or, at least, do such things exist in England? I thought all these things were gone with those good old times you talk of; and were now only confined to the benighted, backward people, on the continent, who are so thoughtless as to dance and sing yet over their black bread. I never see any holidays now-a-days. I was at Donnybrook the other day, and a poor affair that was come to. Not a single row; not fifty people; all sober; empty houses; empty booths; empty purses; empty cars, waiting to carry away all those that never came; nothing full but bottles of whisky that nobody dared to taste for fear of Father Mathew, and faces brimful of chagrin that holidays were grown out of date.

FRIEND.—Well, all the better that Donnybrook Fair does not flourish: but we must have holidays for the people in England as well as other good things.

PRINTER'S DEVIL (*behind the door*).—I wish you may get them!

AUTHOR.—Out, imp! How dare you speak! Take that copy, and begone! (*Exit IMP.*) Ha! ha! I wish you may get 'em, quotha; the imp has sense. Where shall we get our holidays? And where shall we get our holiday coats, our holiday leisure, and our holiday hearts? Yet our ancestors had all these, if Barnaby Googe say true:—

In every house are shouts and cries, and mirth and revell route,
 And dainty tables spred, and all be set with ghestes aboute:
 With sundrie playes, and Christmasse games, and fear and shame
 away,
 The tongue is set at libertie, and hath no kinde of stay.
 And thinges are lawfull then and done, no pleasure passed by,
 That in their mindes they can devise, as if they then should die:
 The chiefest man is he, and one that most deserveth prayse,
 Among the rest, that can find out the fondest kind of playes.

Our ancestors had these jolly hearts, but where are they now? In Dorset, in Somersetshire, in Devon, or in Cornwall? In Ireland, where famine sits on the hearth, and he is the happy man who can exile himself from his native land? In Tipperary, or Limerick, where murder stalks abroad every night, seeking food for vengeance, almost the only food left in the country? Or is it in our manufacturing districts?

FRIEND.—Ay, in the manufacturing districts, and in London; the people are well employed there.

AUTHOR.—Exactly; too much employed; because they are not well enough paid to afford themselves leisure. What say you to the factory children? Where are your holidays for them? In London—mighty, wealthy, and wonderful London—the heart of the greatest empire, and of the greatest commercial system under the sun, there are always thousands who can make a holiday; can steam down to Greenwich at Easter, and carouse a few days at Christmas; but in this same London, what think you of thirty thousand children who have no home, no protectors, no trade, no education, except that of the street, and who must daily steal to live? To them a holiday means starvation. I don't think that we are now-a-days in a very holiday condition.

FRIEND.—But we must try to be. “All work and no play makes Jack a very dull boy.”

AUTHOR.—There you have hit it. We are dull because we have all work and no play. But how to get the play? How to afford it? How to have a merry heart alongside of an empty stomach? Plague on it, it was *merry* England in which the holidays were. It was in *that* country, not in this country of ours. It was in that fine old country where the poets lived, and where flowers actually bloomed in May, and people had time to gather

them; and where there were rural games in the villages instead of a rural police; and cottagers' cows on commons were more common than union workhouses; and where there lived a certain

Worshipful old gentleman who had a great estate,
And kept a brave old house at a bountiful rate,
And an old porter to relieve the poor at his gate;
And had a good old fashion, when Christmas was come,
To call in all his neighbours with bagpipe and drum,
With good cheer enough to furnish every old room,
And old liquor enough to make a cat speak and men dumb,
Like an old courtier!

Heaven bless us! that *was* a country to live in, that merry England! They could make holidays, I warrant you, there. But that's a thing only to be read of. That's the stuff we make our poetry out of—all those fine jollifying times, with their maypoles, and flowers all scattered about on May-day; and feasting at Whitsuntide; and drinking old October, and sack, and ale with roasted crabs in it; and possets and plum-puddings at Christmas. Why, my dear fellow, that was in the golden age—ours is the iron one—iron roads, iron horses, iron spinning-jennies, iron ships, iron bedsteads, and iron hearts. Holidays! I have read of such things, certainly. I remember them as a boy even, but how is it? They are gone somewhere! Perhaps they have emigrated to America or Australia. Perhaps they went off with the leather-breeches-makers, forty years ago? How is it? there has been a queer change here, my friend.

FRIEND.—There has; and it has lasted long enough; let us try to restore our holidays and our mirth.

AUTHOR.—With all my heart! Give me the mirth, and I'll give you plenty of holidays! But for these new times they must be of a new fashion.

FRIEND (*going off*).—Well, think of it;—tell us what they have been, what they are, and what they shall be.

[*Exit* FRIEND.]

AUTHOR.—The good man has set me thinking. What a country this used to be for jollity and heart's ease; *what a change there must have been!* We see the ruins of old castles and old abbeys standing, and we think them beautiful. And we read of old feasts and festivals, and days on which the people of England came out into the sun, and the heart of gladness and kindly good fellowship was as one great dancing heart throughout the throng. We recal those doings, and think *them* beautiful. Are they not picturesque ruins too, like the castles and abbeys? Is not one thing gone just as much as the other? What we would recal is a thing that belonged to the days of these castles and abbeys, and not to ours. It is a thing that belonged to our ancestors and not to us. If we *could* recal it, it would be like calling back the ghost of one of our ancestors. Not the jolly ancestor himself, in all his bodily presence, his soul-and-body union, the daylight man in his earthly solidity, but his ghost—a phantom! a thing to startle and confound us. It is not the *kind* of mirth that our forefathers had that we could bring back again. We might as well bring back their suits of armour, their old windy rooms, their jack-boots, hoops, and farthingales. No! it is a mirth and holiday pleasure of our own that we must have. It is an enjoyment of our own—not an echo and a spectre of theirs—that we want. And why should we not find it? Our ancestors found what suited them in this country—why can we not find what suits us? And yet England was not a tenth part so wealthy or so powerful then as now.

Has wealth done this? Then wealth's a foe to me.

BLOOMFIELD.

Restore holidays, says my worthy friend. True, but first we must restore that which made the holiday spirit of old—ease, sufficiency, and content.

Where are these things gone? What are become of

this ease, this sufficiency, this content. They are not amongst the nobility—they complain of the times. They are not amongst the farmers—they complain of heavy burdens and low prices. They are not amongst the labourers—they complain of low wages. They are not in the shop, the mill, the factory—every place and class has its bubby-jock. It is an odd circumstance, and worth soundly inquiring into, that, just as a nation grew rich, it grew melancholy. That the mass of people who had accumulated those riches grew poor, lost their joyousness, their time and taste for recreation, and became the careworn drudges of the dull treadmill of poverty and labour. This was not always so. As we have seen, our ancestors had their high-days and holidays: never was there a merrier race. England was merry England then. The people of the continent are a merry people now—merry with a fifth part of our wealth.

Should this be so? Should the greatest, the most industrious people on the face of the earth; the people who have wrought the greatest miracles of energy and ingenuity that this world has seen, be the only people who do not enjoy the fruit of their achievements, and rejoice in the good things they have created? Yet let any one say what is his first impression on landing in England, after some sojourn abroad. That every one is pondering on some tremendous event. There is a stern, eager impression on every face—a hurrying on as to some intense object—a print of care on feature and on limb, on the individual and the mass, which are most startling to the mind which has been so lately filled with the gay imagery of happy peasantry and citizens of the working class, amidst their holiday music and their social dances.

In 1842, I was reading the English newspapers in the public news-room at Heidelberg, in Germany. What

was the great topic of the day? The horrors just brought to light by the parliamentary inquiry into the state of the people, and especially of women and children in the coal-mines, and factories, and workshops of England. All those horrors, in which delicate women and little children figured, half-naked, bearing huge burdens in the bowels of the earth; in damp, in darkness, in running water, where they stood whole days; of—but enough—I ceased to read; my heart seemed to collapse; my brain was in a whirl—I was actually sick. I walked out into the air. It was bright noon; the bright, clear, joyous noon of the south of Germany; and, at this moment, out burst from the public schools of the working classes, hundreds of little boys and girls, released to their twelve o'clock dinners, and all healthy, happy, merry, and shouting, as if they had five times too much pleasure in them for their need.

But what a contrast! Proud England—rich England—mighty and free England, grinding its children to death in mines and mills, in subterranean darkness and nakedness, and poor, despotic Germany guarding *its* children till their twelfth year, and giving them all an education! And this had gone on for years; the child-murder of the mill and the mine had gone on, and men had gradually accustomed themselves to it, till they did not see its enormity. Liberals and philanthropists applauded it, and called it free trade! Gracious Heaven! free trade in the sinews and lives of tender children of eight years old! Little children pitched against the Juggernaut of steam; and those who denounced this immolation to the trading mammon, were sneered at for the cant of humanity—by the most hideous of all cants, the cant of cruelty! Free trade, forsooth, in the lives and happiness of children! 'Twas a vile abuse of terms. Trade is

trade only when it deals in legitimate articles; beyond that it is far *too free*—it is then free outrage.

But the British humanity stepped in and rescued the victims of our trading cupidity. Acts of parliament and legal inspectors stood forth as the guardians of the weak in mine and factory. Still the same voice of humanity requires to be raised for other victims of trading usury. The late revelations in the *Morning Chronicle* of the wretched condition and miserable payment of needlewomen, and needlemen, shirt-makers, trouser-makers, coat-makers, and scores of other things, are but the certain forerunners of a remedy. The thirty thousand children in the streets of London, suffering every moral and physical evil, are no longer overlooked, and must be cared for. Such men as Lord Ashley, Sidney Herbert, and Southwood Smith, are abroad. Ragged schools are in existence; the very thieves call on the philanthropist to meet them, and consider how they can be introduced to a better life. Better times and more intellectual resources are prepared and preparing for the labouring classes. Prince Albert, with a generous wisdom calculated to render his exalted position the means of incalculable service to humanity, displays a living interest in this regeneration of the masses, and exerts himself to extend the advantages of trade between the nations. In country, as well as in town, the great and influential are awaking to the fact that the working man must be better remunerated. We need not, therefore, go farther into the explanation of the repulsive mystery of the greatest people on earth piling upon their heads, by their unexampled energies, only toil never ending, and recompense never beginning. That is now well enough understood. It is *because labour has been defrauded of its due*.

The public has now discovered what the amiable poet Bloomfield discovered long ago. He found

The aspect still of ancient joy put on,—
The aspect only, with the substance gone.

And he cried—

Let labour have its due! my cot shall be
From chilling want and guilty murmurs free:
Let labour have its due! then peace is mine,
And never, never shall my heart repine.

That is the true secret of restoring to England its fine old character of merry England. *Let labour have its due*, and joy will spring up thick as the flowers of our fields. We shall again see the rural dance, and hear the sound of rural music. Make the heart glad, and the song *will* burst forth from the mouths of young men and maidens. *Let labour have its due*; let a good sound supply of bread and beef, and tea and coffee, find its way into the poor man's pantry, as the just reward of his exertions, and there will be merry times again in England. Ay, never was there such a merry England as there will be then. Never had England in her holiday-times a tenth part of the people, the knowledge, the power, the capacity of enjoyment that they have now. And these times *shall* come. They are not far off. Great changes have taken place, and are taking place. The public mind of England has satisfied itself that a better state of things is necessary—that the people who have made England, be they of what class they will, must enjoy England. The people have now read, and thought; and, above all, *they have suffered*, and out of that suffering they have derived a deep wisdom; they have learnt to know their own rights and the rights of others. They will now combine, not to attack, but to assert—not to tread on the privileges of

others, but to claim their own. They will combine to dig new channels for the current of public wealth, to make a due portion of it to flow into the track of labour; and not only so, but to make labour itself flow into the true channel. They will spread themselves over the field of labour, as the general good requires it.

Already the crowd who have trodden on each other's heels, have discovered that steam and science, commerce and literature, have made three-fourths of the globe but an expanded England. In England or Ireland, in America or Australia, wherever the British tongue is spoken, and British blood flows in the people's veins, there they are still of the great English family—can enjoy English thoughts, feelings, and privileges, and can elevate and combine the true interests of the English race. Therefore emigration is leading its quarter of a million now annually into the more distant fields of the British empire, an empire extended far beyond the nominal shadow of the British Crown. In new homes, but all made such by Anglo-Saxon enterprise, amid new mountains, and on the green banks of new and majestic rivers, these annual detachments of the great army of civilisation are sitting down to create at once domestic plenty for themselves, and fresh sources of industry and wealth for the brave old mother country.

As our population thus diffuses itself on all sides into the fields and forests of God's plenty, and at the active centre better principles of social economy are recognised—as they are every day becoming recognised—then for holidays.

But when the people do find leisure and hearts for holidays, they will be holidays such as the world never yet saw. We are no longer the same people as our ancestors were. They were great children, and could leap and laugh, and play with hobby-horses; but we have read and thought,

and the poorest artisan has now more refined taste and intellectual wealth than a king had of old. In the words of one of them:—

Ay, they are thinking,—at the frame and loom,
At bench, and forge, and in the bowelled mine.

Then, our holidays must be holidays of a higher stamp. There must be music, and dance, and sport, for youth and glad hearts; but there must be more—there must be a mixture of the intellectual in our pleasures. We must have books, and talk of matters of mind, and sights of works of art, as well as of the works of nature, to give to our holidays a charm which, though it will be fit for a philosopher, shall thrill through the soul of the working man like the first rapturous outburst of his marriage bells. We must have a preparation for the holidays that are coming. We must have those public walks and gardens that are talked of for our large towns. We must have that 10,000*l.* that is lying in the Treasury, voted by parliament years ago for that very purpose, called for by public-spirited men of our towns, and thus employed. We must have in each of these gardens a public building—the people's house of recreation. They shall find a dancing-hall, a coffee-room, a reading-room, and a conversation-room. The people in every large town of Germany have such a house—their *HARMONIE*—where they come together to enjoy themselves, and do enjoy themselves in a manner that a prince or a princess might be proud to share in.

And then, for the enjoyment of all these delightful pleasures, in which not only physical health and excitement, but intellectual tastes unite, for which the people are daily preparing themselves—what a world has science opened! Think of the steam-boat and the steam-train, ready to bear away their thousands to the very scenes where they would wish to be. To carry the people of the

cities, especially of enormous London, afar into the country; to the open heath—the fresh forest—to the seaside—to old halls, and gardens where the mysterious spirit of beauty has been awaiting their arrival for a thousand years. To carry the country people, on the contrary, to the towns—to the sight of the cheerful, happy crowds, rich shops, noble buildings, and galleries of painting and statuary; to zoological gardens and scientific spectacles, full, to them, of the enchantment of wonder.

Do we talk of impossible things? The cheap trains already make such things within the reach of every man, woman, and child, that can but get a single day, and a few shillings to spend on it, in the year. On one day last summer 7000 people visited, by means of an excursion train, the splendid house and grounds of the Duke of Devonshire at Chatsworth, in the Peak of Derbyshire; and every day there, and at the old hall of Haddon, and at numbers of noble halls all over the country, throughout the summer, the coming and going of the people is like the visiting of a fair.

Better times are coming, when these things shall be still more within the reach of every one of our fellow-countrymen; for they are not only awaking to a knowledge and a taste for these things, but they are laying up fruits for their own purposes. The alarms that some time ago were felt on the subject of popular education, lest knowledge should spoil good servants, and destroy the spirit of industry in the labouring masses, have received an amazing answer. While the people were ignorant, they continued in destitution. What they gained they spent in a drunkenness that has now nothing like it in existence. But while they have been acquiring knowledge they have also acquired a great capital, and have actually laid up in savings banks upwards of 30,000,000*l.* of money!

That is a social phenomenon such as all the ages of the world before have not produced. That is the effect of the industrial and economical stimulus of knowledge on the people! That has come, and the holiday times will come. And still further, the spirit of improvement has been met by a fitting spirit in high quarters. Our excellent Queen has thrown open Windsor—the most royal of all royal palaces in the world—to the free and unpaid entry of all her loving subjects. The royal example, as we have seen, has been emulated by the nobility, who have thrown open their parks, their gardens, and their fine old picture galleries, like their royal mistress, to the feet and the eyes of those who have so long fought, worked, and suffered for the maintenance of the stately glory of those things.

These are great forebodings of the future holidays of a great and educated people; and this lovely isle of ours, with its rivers and mountains, its sweet fields and villages, its cities and ancestral halls, its palaces and its monumental churches, shall open up the world of its delights to a people worthy of beholding them, and by that very communicativeness of its beauty shall sink deeper and deeper into the heart of their love. But no one can hasten this day so much as he whom we shall next introduce, or his more accomplished successor.

THE COUNTRY SCHOOLMASTER.

The village all declared how much he knew:

'Twas certain he could write—and cipher too.—GOLDSMITH.

THE COUNTRY SCHOOLMASTER is one of the most marked characters of the country. Spite of the tingling remembrance of his blows, we have a real love for him, and sympathise with him in his sense of neglect. He complains, and justly too, that he has had the first moulding of the intellects of many of the greatest geniuses which

this country has produced, yet what genius in his glory has looked back to his old dominie with a grateful recollection? The worthy Sir Walter Scott is almost the only one. Dominie Sampson, Reuben Butler, Jedediah Cleishbotham, schoolmaster and parish-clerk of Gandercleuch, and Peter Pattieson, are delightful proofs of the fact. But Scott saw the world of peculiar character which lies in the country schoolmaster, and disdained not to honour it as it deserves. Beyond this, little renown, in faith, has the village Dionysius won. Shenstone has done fitting honours to the village schoolmistress; but the master has been fain to shelter himself under the sole bush of laurel which good-natured Oliver Goldsmith has planted to his renown in the "Deserted Village."

But "past is all his fame,"—at least with this learned and march-of-intellect modern public. We have got steam and railroads; and now there is a cry for a steam and railroad system of education. Lancaster, and his rival Bell, have turned the schoolmaster into a sort of drill-sergeant, and marched the children of the poor by whole troops and regiments into the mysteries of A B C. But beyond the mysteries of A B C they have not got them; or, if they have taught them more than that, it is only to calculate how they can cheat one another with the greater adroitness. By their A B C they are able to *see* further into mischief; their *letters* prove no *lets* to a wider acquaintance with crime; and their manœuvres within doors are only the forerunners to manœuvres without. The moral interior is found to be yet untouched by the marching and manœuvring machinery; and there is now one wide outcry for a national, religious, moral, and intellectual education, or all is declared to be over with us. When it is found that two-thirds of the persons now convicted of crimes have been the inmates of Sunday-schools,

it is time to be on the look-out for something more effectual.

Well, success to the experiment! Let churchmen and dissenters adjust their plans for carrying it on without running foul one of another. Let us have a great national school in each parish in the kingdom. It is easy to build when the funds are once obtained. Plenty of children are ready to rush in as soon as the new doors are opened; but there is just one little difficulty, which the sanguine abettors of the scheme, amid all their valour, by which they knock down objections, and dispose of difficulties as easily as Don Quixote squandered the flock of sheep, never seem for a moment to dream of; and that is, *Where are the schoolmasters to come from?*

Ay, where are the schoolmasters to come from? A single schoolmaster is not a thing that can be made in a moment. If he is to be good for anything, he is a work of toil and time. How, then, are you to come in a single day to at least ten thousand of them? for so many are our parishes. From the days of Milton to the present, what philosophers and statesmen have been labouring to devise a perfect system of tuition! Locke strove to *unlock* the mystery; Bacon had tried it before him. Descartes, Rousseau, Miss Edgeworth, Miss Hamilton, Hannah More, and a great many *more* misses, have been at it since, and *missed* it. Well, then, if we have not been able to discover the true system, how are we to discover—*heigh presto*—the true men? Are the system, and the men to work it, to be created by the miraculous powers of an act of parliament? An act of parliament can decree funds, and create a commission and board of commissioners, I grant you; and that is about all that the majority of our most zealous advocates for government education seem to see. A commissionership, with about eight hundred a-

year, and a guinea a-day for expenses, is a particularly beautiful prospect; and to desire a commissionership, is to desire a good thing. But will a board of commission, as a matter of course, become a board of education? By what enchanter's wand are messieurs the commissioners to evoke, in an hour, for the supply of all her Majesty's ten thousand parishes, as many schoolmasters, accomplished in all the knowledge, the moral fitness, and the practical skill which are necessary to carry into effect such a perfect system of popular education as the world has not yet seen? The system of Fellenberg is, perhaps, the very highest approach to that system of literary, intellectual, and Christian education which we need. But where are the men to direct even Fellenberg's system? Fellenberg, during a labour of forty years, has been compelled to begin by teaching himself, and to go on by moulding and creating teachers to his mind. All those in England who have essayed a better system of popular education—Lancaster, Bell, Wood of Edinburgh, Captain Brenton of Hackney, Lady Byron at Ealing, Lord Lovelace at Otcham, Dr. Kaye Shuttleworth at Norwood, Mrs. Tuckfield at Fulford, in Devonshire—have found that there were no such things as masters ready made to carry out a truly effective system of popular tuition. They all cry out, "We want masters." They all declare, "There are no such things in existence as schoolmasters qualified to administer a suitable education to the people."

Thus, they who are clamouring for an immediate enactment for a national system of education—and no man is more anxious for a good national system than I am—are calling for a clock which shall go without a pendulum; a steam-engine without piston or cylinder; or a coach without horses. They want, in fact, a system superior to all that has yet been introduced, and ten thousand masters

to work it; each individual man of whom must be in himself the highest specimen of combined intelligence and moral training: in a word, the noblest achievement of modern education, or he is not competent to the solemn duties of his office. The old race of schoolmasters cannot serve the need; they are declared to be ignorant pretenders, and on an erroneous system. Here leave we, then, the flaming advocate of instant reformation, a national enactment, and ten thousand duly prepared and accomplished professors of the new system, to chew the cud over this one little query,—“Where are the schoolmasters to come from?” and turn again to our master of the old school.

Poor fellow! true enough are Oliver's words—“Past is all his fame.” He has had a quiet, a flattering life of it, for many a generation; the rustics have gazed and wondered

That one small head could carry all he knew.

But the innovations of this innovating age have reached even him at last. He has built his cabin in an obscure hamlet, or, as in Ireland, set up his hedge-school under some sunny bank; he has retreated to the remotest glens, and the fastnesses of unfrequented mountains; but even there the modern spirit of reform has found him out. He sees the cloud of ruinous blackness collecting over his head, out of which are about to spring ten thousand schoolmasters of a new-fangled stamp; and he knows that it is all up with him for ever. The railroad of national education is about to run through his ancient patrimony, and he shakes his head as he asks himself whether he is to come in for equitable compensation? No; his fame is past, and his occupation is going too. He is to be run down by an act of parliament, though he never asked for an act of parliament to set him up. He was the selector

of his own location—the builder of his own fortunes. The good old honest stimulant of caring for himself, led him to care for the education of his neighbours' children. He needed no subscription to buy land and build a spacious school; he opened his cottage door, and in walked all the lads of the hamlet and neighbouring farms, with slates hung round their necks, books under their arms, and their dinners in their bags. For fourpence a-week, reading and spelling; and sixpence for those who wrote and ciphered; he gave them hard benches and hard blows; and when he had as many stowed into his little house as were about enough to stifle him and one another, thought himself a lucky fellow, and looked round on the whole horde, with dirty faces and corduroy jackets and trousers, rough heads, and white or blue pinafores, with a pride which saw the future neighbourhood filled with clever fellows, all of his own drubbing.

Poor old schoolmaster! little didst thou foresee these topsy-turvy times when I used to sit amongst such a rustic crew, and achieve pot-hooks and fish-hooks at that sorely blotted and lacerated desk, and saw thee sitting in thy glory, looking, in my eyes, the very image of mortal greatness. Little, as we stole late into school, having been delayed by the charms of birds'-nests or cockchaffers, and heard thee thunder forth in lion tones, "Eh! what's this?—

A miller a moller,
A ten o'clock scholar.

March this way! march this way!"—little, as we ran, wild truants, through cowslip fields and by sunny brooks, with hearts beating with mingled rapture and dread of the morrow,—little, as we riotously barred thee out for a holiday, did we ever dream that so dark a day could come upon thee! But, in faith, it is just at hand; and if we

are to preserve a portrait of the country schoolmaster, we must sketch it now or never.

Oliver Goldsmith has hit off some of his most striking features. The country schoolmaster, in his finest field of glory, the hamlet—where, except the clergyman, there are no higher personages than old-fashioned farmers, who received their *book-learning* from himself or his predecessor—is a man of importance, both in his own and others' eyes. He yet makes the rustics stare at his “words of learned length and thundering sound.” He can yet dispute with the parson, though he is more frequently the profound admirer of his reverence. He looks upon himself as the greatest man in the parish, except the parson, whose knowledge he extols to the skies, and whose reading of the church services he pronounces to be the finest in the world. The villagers always link “our parson and our schoolmaster” in one breath of admiration. If the schoolmaster can quote a sentence of Latin, wonderful is then their wonder at his power. He is always styled “a long-headed fellow, as deep as the north star.”

As, in Goldsmith's days, he can still often gauge, and is the land-measurer of the district. In the bright evening nook of the public-house, where the farmer, and the village shopkeepers, and the blacksmith, duly congregate, his voice is loud, his air is lofty, and his word is law. Here he often confounds their intellects by some such puzzling query as “Whether the egg or the bird was made first?” “What man Cain expected to meet in the wilderness before there was a man there?” or, “Who was the father of Zebedee's children?”

If self-educated, as he generally is, he has spent the best part of his life in studying Latin; or he is deep in mathematics; or he has dived into the mysteries of as-

trology; has great faith in Raphael's annual prognostications, and in "Culpepper's Herbal." His literature consists of a copy of verses sent now and then to the neighbouring newspaper, or solutions of mathematical problems for the learned columns of the same. Perhaps he adventures a flight so high as one of the London magazines; and if, perchance, his lucubration should appear in the "Gentleman's," his pride is unbounded, and his reputation in his neighbourhood made for life. His library has been purchased at the bookstall of the next market-town, or he has taken it in at the door, in numbers, from the walking stationer. "Rapin's History of England," "Josephus," and "Barclay's Dictionary," in large quartos, on coarse paper; and the histories, with coarse cuts, are sure to figure amongst them. He carries on a little trade in ink, pens, writing paper, and other stationery, himself. If he be married, his wife is almost sure to drive a still brisker trade in gingerbread, Darby and Joans, toffy, and lollipops. As he is famous for his penmanship, he is the great letter-writer of the neighbourhood; and many is the love secret that is confided to his ear. Nay, he letters sign-boards, and cart-boards, and coffin plates; for who is there besides that can? He makes wills, and has, in former days, before the lawyers hedged round their monopoly with the penalty of illegality on such deeds, drawn conveyances, and was the peaceful practitioner in all such affairs for his neighbourhood.

Oh! multifarious are the doings of the country schoolmaster, and amusing their variety. What an air of pedagogue pomp distinguishes him; how antiquely amusing is his school costume often; how much more amusing the piebald patchwork of his language. His address has frequently no little of mine ancient Pistol in it. But how uniquely curious is the country schoolmaster in love!

I happen to have in my possession the actual love-letter of a country schoolmaster, which, as a curiosity, is worth transcribing. The dominie has now long been married to his fair one, who is as pretty a little Tartar as any in the country. He writes something in the phraseology of a Quaker; but he is, in fact, the parish-clerk. In copying this letter, whatever any of my readers may think, I alter not a word, except the actual names of places.

“ Nuthurst, Nov. 1st, 1816.

“ ESTEEMED FRIEND,—I embrace the present opportunity of addressing these few lines unto thee, hoping they will find thee in good health, which leaves me the same, thank my God! Respected P., I have often told thee I don't much like illustrating my sentiments by correspondence, but I write with a majestic air of animation and delight when I communicate my thoughts to one that I love beyond description: yes! to one that is virtuous, innocent, and unblemishable; which has a comely behaviour, a loving disposition, and a goodly principle. And thou the person! charming fair one, which may justly boast of thy virtue, and laugh at others' aspersion. Dear P., when I reflect on all thy amiable qualities, and fond endearments, I am charmingly exalted, and amply satisfied. My senses are more stimulated with love, and every wish gives thee a congratulation. Amiable P., I've meditated on our former accompaniments, and been wonderfully dignified at thine condescending graces. I, in particular, admire thy good temper, and thine relentful forgiveness. For when we have partook of a walk together, some trifling idea has exasperated my disposition, and rendered my behaviour ungenerous and disreputable. Thou, like a benevolent friend, soothed the absurd incensement, and instantly resuscitated our respective amorousness, and

doubly exaggerated our beloved enamours. While above all others I thee regard, and while love is spontaneously imprinted in our hearts, let it have its unbounded course. Loving friend, I was more than a little gratified that thou wrote to thy mistress, which was thy duty, for she has been thy peculiar friend, and gave thee competent admonition. She is a faithful monitor, and a well-wisher to thine everlasting welfare. I was absolutely grieved when I heard of thee not being well, and completely fretted that I was aloof, and could not sympathise with thine inconsolatory moments. I candidly hope thy cough is better, and I earnestly desire that our absence may be immediately transformed into lasting presence, that we may enjoy our fond hopes and loving embraces.

“ My dear, the last Sunday that I was at Bevington, I parted with thee about four o’clock; and I stopped in the market-place looking at the soldiers parading, and harkening the band playing till about six o’clock; then I proceeded on my nightly excursion. I called at the public-house, and was spouting a little of my romancing nonsense, and I instantly received a blow from a person in the adjoining company. I never retaliated, which was very surprising, but a wisely omission. I should not have troubled thee with this tedious explanation hadst thou not been preposterously informed about the subject. Thy ingrateful relations can’t help telling thee of my vain actions, which is said purposely to abolish our acquaintance. But we are so accustomed to their insinuating persuasions and ambidexterous tales, that renders them unlikely to execute their wilful designs. Our loves are too inflexible than to be separated by a set of contemptuous oafs.

“ My dearest dear, at this present time I wish I had thee dandling between my arms. I would give that sweet mouth ten thousand kisses, for I prefer thy well-composed structure above all other secular beauties.

“ Loving P., I will positively come to fetch thee at the respective period, when we can have a consolable and delightful journey homewards, reanimate our fond and innocent delights, salute at pleasure, and every kiss will sweeten our progressive paths; they will add delightfully to our warm affections, and invigorate us to perform our journey with the greatest facility.

“ I thank thee for sending thy complimentary love to me, which I conclude with ten thousand times ten thousand respects.

“ I remain thine ever faithful and constant lover,
“ S. G.”

But this is only the ludicrous side of the country schoolmaster; he has another and a nobler one. Much as we may now despise him, and lightly as we may desire, by one sweeping act of parliament, to consign him and all his compeers to instant ruin and a union workhouse *finale*, to him the country owes a large debt of gratitude. Without aid of parliament or parish, from age to age, he has opened his little gymnasium, and tamed and civilised the fauns and satyrs of the rural wilderness. What little light and knowledge have radiated through our villages and fields, it is he that has kindled them. It is he who has enabled the farmer, the miller, the baker, and every little tradesman and mechanic to conduct his affairs, manage his markets, and add to the capital of the nation. It is he who has taught the rough cub of the hamlet to make his bow, and to respect his superiors; in fact, to get a glimmering of morals and manners, and a possible shape of humanity. Nay, many of these humble men have been clergymen, who have won honours at college, and have been full of the fire of genius and the kernel of wisdom, but who, not having the golden wings of this world, have sunk down into obscure Thorpes and Wicks, and in

far-off fields and forest regions have gone on their way, like little unnoticed brooks, moaning over their lot, yet scattering plenty and greenness around them. How many are there at this day, sitting in uncouth garbs, in uncouth places, on dreary moorlands, and amongst wild fells and mountains. Such have I seen in various parts of these kingdoms, and wondered at their patience and holy resignation. On the tops of wildest hills, by some little chapel, like that of Firbank, near Sedberg, in Yorkshire, I have opened the door of a cabin, which was filled with a hum as of bees, and found a company of bare-legged boys and girls round a peat fire on the hearth, and a young man, with the air of a scholar and a gentleman, sitting as their teacher. Yes, in many a bleak and picturesque situation, where the old school-bell hangs in the old chestnut-tree; in a little rude church or chapel, or ancient school-house, are such men as Wordsworth has described in Robert Walker of Cumberland, still to be found.

What a picture that of Robert Walker is! Eight hours in each day, during five days in each week, and half of Saturday, except when the labours of husbandry were very urgent, he was occupied in teaching. His seat was within the rails of the altar; the communion-table was his desk; and, like Shenstone's schoolmistress, the master employed himself at the spinning-wheel, while the children were repeating their lessons by his side.

This mountain patriarch, who never made any charge for teaching, but took all that came—and such as could afford gave him what they pleased—not only performed service twice every Sunday, but was the scrivener of the neighbourhood, writing out petitions, deeds of conveyance, wills, covenants, etc.; so that at certain periods of the year he was obliged to sit up the greater part of the night. Besides spinning at all possible hours, he also cultivated

his garden and a little farm, and assisted his neighbours in haymaking and shearing their sheep. "I found him," said a stranger, "sitting at the head of his table, dressed in a coarse blue frock, trimmed with black horn buttons; a checked shirt, a leathern strap about his neck for a stock, a coarse apron, and a pair of great wooden-soled shoes, plated with iron to preserve them; a child upon his knee, eating his breakfast; his wife and other children waiting on each other, or teasing and spinning wool. Every Sunday, served upon the long table, were messes of broth for such of his congregation who came from a distance, and usually took their seats as parts of his household." And what was the value of his living? 17*l.* 10*s.* a-year!

It would be difficult, perhaps, to find exactly another Robert Walker, though, we believe, many a Welsh clergyman could match him, and men of like character and habits many a primitive nook can yet show us. It is under such men that Shakspeare, Burns, Wordsworth, Newton, Crabbe, and many another noble genius, have sate in their boyish days, and received from them the elements of that knowledge with which they were afterwards to do such marvels before all mankind. We will warrant that such was the man whom good-natured Goldsmith first trembled at, and then immortalised. The country schoolmaster, indeed, has cause of high pride; and when we pass an act of parliament for our ten thousand new schools, and spec-and-span new masters—Battersea Training Establishment will not supply us all at once—let us remember the long reign and the old glories, and the patient and ill-paid merits of the old country schoolmaster, and "temper the wind to the shorn lamb." Bitter will be the day of revolution for him, but we can make it less bitter; hard will be the fall, but kindness and generous sympathy can break it, and dismiss the

picturesque, if somewhat dogmatic old man, to an old age of honourable ease.

A WINTER PICTURE.

Dampness and gloom prevail: the air is still;
With myriad crystal-drops the hedgerow thorn
Glitters and drips—drips grass and springing corn.
I 'tempt not now the cloud-enveloped hill,
Yet hazy clouds my valley-path surround.
The wild-fowl cries upon the sedgy mere;
I see it not in motion—yet I hear
Of splashing wings and trailing feet the sound.
Gigantic seems each dim-discovered thing—
The crag—the bare and many-branchéd tree—
The rook, that slowly sails past on the wing—
The stalking clown—the cattle on the lea.
And human voices, sent I know not whence,
Ring through this veil of shadow deep and dense.



MARCH.

March in his waking strength! The west wind loud,
Rising in vigorous and sonorous play,
At once has hurried from the heavens away
Their slumb'rous guests of shadow and of cloud.
The earth smiles greenly, as if glad and proud
To feel the sun-light, faintly though it fall.
But what a rich transparency o'er all!
Sky, air, and rushing waters are endowed
With a surpassing brightness, clear and blue;
Flushed are the far woods, and a violet hue
Tinges the far horizon! 'Tis a day
That breathes its vigour through heart, soul, and frame;
Cares, like the clouds, and pains are chased away—
Oh! for a life where each day were the same!

SPRING is come! She may, perhaps, at first be mistaken
for Winter. She may not at once have taken off her tra-

velling garb and rough wrappings, but here she is. As she begins to throw off one dark and shaggy habiliment after another, we see not our old-fashioned friend, Winter, with his hardy, wrinkled face, and his keen eye, full of cutting jokes, and those horny hands that, in his mere playfulness, nipped us mercilessly by the ear, and often by the nose, but we descry the graceful form of the gentle and gracious Spring. We feel the thrill of her presence, knowing all the beauty and the love that she brings with her.

Spring is come! It is March; rough, yet pleasant, vigorous and piping March. It is the month of life, of strength, and hope. We shall soon hear his voice and "the sound of his going in the tops of the trees." His gales will come rushing and sounding over forest and lea, and shake the old trees about our houses with a merry strength. Oh! how different to the solemn fitfulness of autumn, or the wild wrath of winter, and we shall lie in our beds at midnight—and, shall we not? pray for safety to the thousands of our fellow-men at sea.

People are all eager to be at work in their gardens. The earth turns up fresh and mellow, and there is a beauty in its very blackness that charms the eye. Flowers are fast springing in the borders, generally of a delicate and poetic beauty, as the Alpine violet, the dogtooth violet, daffodils, hyacinths, squills, and saxifrages. The snowdrop still lifts its graceful head, and the taller snowflake comes forth. Almond-trees blossom, a brilliant spectacle while the trees are yet leafless. The taccamahac shows its long catkins; the mezereon exhibits its clustered blossoms, and the first red China-rose unfolds itself to the fresh air.

In the woods and on the warm banks how delightful is it to see green things vigorously bursting through the mould, and sweet flowers nodding to us as old friends. Coltsfoot and cardamine embellish old fallows and green

moist meadows; the star of Bethlehem gleams in woods and shady places; the celandine and kingcup glow in all their golden lustre; the daisy once more greets us, and the crocus spreads like a purple flood over those meadows which it has beautified for ages. Such are those near Nottingham. But above all the favourites of the field, the violet, white or purple, now diffuses its sweetness under our hedges and along the banks which we have known from our childhood. And how many scenes of that happy childhood does the first sight of them recal! How the mind flies back to the spots which we may, perhaps, never again visit, and where they who made so much of the delight of those years have long ceased to exist.

Still to the very last, spite of sorrow and care and desolating memories, spring and the first violets bring their poetry with them all the world over. We have already observed with what eagerness, as of children, the Germans set forth, in groups or alone, to hunt for the first March violets. Through woods and vineyards, overhanging far-stretching scenes they go, knowing of old where the purple strangers first appear. But the boys have been as surely before them, and meet them with their little odorous bouquets at all turns and corners.

Well! a thousand welcomes to Spring, though she cannot bring back, with all her flowers, the flower of our youth; though she cannot, with all her poetry, bring back the poetry of early love; though she cannot repaint the rose on cheeks that are pillowed beneath the yew; nor enable us to offer the first-gathered violets to the dear souls who are in heaven. Yet she brings joy to the earth still.

The bees are once more out; the hare runs, forgetting her fears, across the verdant fields; the harmless snake comes forth and basks on the primrose bank. All nature

is full of motion. The fowls of the farm-yard lay; the pheasants crow in the copse; the ringdove coos; the linnet and the goldfinch sing; and man is busy at fence and drain, is ploughing and sowing, and pruning and planting, while he talks of the good years gone, and hopes for more. Spring stirs everything with her influence—the depths of the soil, and the depths of the heart; and makes us, more than all other seasons, in love with life, and full of longings after those who are dear to us in time and eternity. It is then that we are most sad, yet happy; most tearful and prayerful; most haunted by memory, and discursive in hope. We live more lovingly in the past, the present, and the future. There is a spring in the spirit as in nature; and the soul puts forth all its buds of anticipation, its most delicate blossoms of affection; and every leaf of a higher or tenderer consciousness in our nature unfolds itself, and we find that God and heaven are not far off!

MOTHERING SUNDAY.

In turning to the days in March which have been held from the most ancient times as popular festivals, there is none that can offer to the mind, in the present day, so strong an attraction as MOTHERING SUNDAY; also called *Mid-Lent Sunday*.

As may be seen in Brand, this, like all our old festivals, was borrowed from the ancient pagan festivals of Greece and Rome. The religious use of beans was, in the ancient nations, connected with the dead. On this Sunday the Roman Church celebrated the mystery of Christ's death, as well as on Good Friday, and hence it was called *Passion Sunday*. Following the usage of the pagan church, the papal one, to lead the common people easily into the change, also used beans on this day. These were afterwards changed for peas; and on this day, as at Newcastle-

on-Tyne, grey peas were fried with butter, after being steeped all night, and were given away, and eaten on this Sunday, which was called for this cause *Carling Sunday*. But why Carling Sunday? These peas were called *carlings*, or peas to be eaten on Carle or Carr Sunday. But why Carle or Carr Sunday? Here we come back again to antiquity. Brand, quoting Marshall's observations on the Saxon gospels, tells us truly that "the Friday on which Christ was crucified was called by the Germans *Guter Freytag* and *Carr Freytag*, because carr, or karr, signifies a satisfaction for a fine or penalty." The week preceding Easter in Germany is still called Char-Woche, or Stille-Woche; that is, the week of sorrow, or the still-week; and all musical entertainments and gay parties cease at that time.

It may be interesting to many to see how exactly we and the Germans, proceeding from the same ancestry, have maintained the same popular customs. It was the custom on this day, before the Reformation in this country, for children to carry about spears, with cracknels suspended on them, and for two figures—one of Winter and another as Summer—to go about and gather contributions.

Thus children also beare, with speares, their cracknelles round about,
 And two they have, whereof the one is called Sommer stout,
 Apparelde all in greene, and dressed in youthful fine array;
 The other, Winter, clad in mosse, with heare all hoare and graye.
 These two together fight, of which the palm doth Sommer get.
 From hence to meat they go, and all with wine their whistles wet.

"Popish Kingdom," fol. 49.

These customs, which perished with us at the Reformation, still exist in Germany; as may be seen from the following quotation from my "Rural and Social Life in Germany:"—

On summer-day, as they call it, which falls in March,

on Latere Sunday—for they make very little mention of spring, but talk, as soon as the winter is over, of *summer* coming—they make a bretzel (a species of cracknel) of a different size and shape to the Lent bretzel, which they call Summer bretzel. This the children in the Palatinate carry about on wands, adorned with ribbons, throughout the street, and sing the summer in with a song, which bears a striking resemblance to the oldest song in the English language, beginning—

Ye somer ist yeomen in,
Loud sing cuckoo, etc.;

and which, no doubt, was brought in by the Saxons, and thus sung in England by their children. That it was so is obvious, by the language being still almost pure German—

Der sommer ist gekommen ein,
Laut singt kukuk, etc.

It is still sung in Germany.

SUMMER'S-DAY SONG.

Tra, ri, ro!
The summer comes once mo'!
We'll to the garden hie us,
And watch till he comes by us.
Yo, yo, yo!
The summer comes once mo'!

Tra, ri, ro!
The summer comes once mo'!
We'll, behind the hedges creeping,
Wake the summer from his sleeping.
Yo, yo, yo!
The sommer comes once mo'!

Tra, ri, ro!
The summer comes once mo'!
To wine, boys, to wine;
All in my mother's cellar
Lies famous muscateller.
Yo, yo, yo!
The summer comes once mo'!

Tra, ri, ro!
 The summer comes once mo'!
 The summer!—the summer!
 The winter's now the roamer.
 Yo, yo, yo!
 The summer comes once mo'!

Tra, ri, ro!
 The summer comes once mo'!
 To beer, boys, to beer!
 The winter lies in bands, O!
 And he who won't come here,
 We'll trounce him with our wands, O!
 Yo, yo, yo!
 The summer comes once mo'!

Tra, ri, ro!
 The summer comes once mo'!
 A golden table the master we wish,
 At every corner a baked fish;
 And, midst to see
 Of wine cans full three,
 That he therewith may jocund be!
 Yo, yo, yo!
 The summer comes once mo'!

As a proof of the antique rudeness of the original, we may give the concluding stanza:—

Tra, ri, ro!
 Der Sommer der ist do!
 Wir wünschen dem Herrn ein'n goldnen Tisch,
 Auf jedem Eck' ein'n g'backnen Fisch,
 Und mitten hinein
 Drei Kannen voll Wein,
 Dass er dabei kann fröhlich seyn!
 Jo, jo, jo!
 Der Sommer der ist do!

On summer-day, also, two men go round; one dressed in moss and straw, as Winter, and the other in ivy, or other evergreen leaves, hung with garlands and ribbons, like our Jack-in-the-green; or rather they go round in a sort of covering of this, out of which they can creep at pleasure; and in this form they beg from house to house.

Such were the exactly corresponding customs in the two kindred countries of Germany and England on this day, and such is the antiquity of these customs. But there was one custom on this day, and which was, till late years, widely observed in the rural districts of England, and probably is still in some, that gave its name to the day, and was well worthy of being for ever perpetuated. It was called Mothering Sunday, because, says Brand, while the Roman Church was the established religion, it was the custom to visit their mother church on Mid-Lent Sunday, and make their offerings on the high altar. So ancient and deep was this feeling, that the epistle for that day, which alluded to Jerusalem, *Mater omnium*—Jerusalem, the mother of us all—Galatians iv. 21, is still retained by the English Church, though the occasion is forgotten.

This feeling of the beautiful maternal relation descended from the Church to domestic life; and it became the custom for all servants and apprentices on this day to be allowed to visit their mothers, and carry with them some little presents. They were received with a rural feast, in keeping with the old customs of the day. Beans, in the progressive refinement of living, had given way to peas, and peas to boiled corn; and, therefore, the entertainment of to-day was a dish of excellent furmety.

Why should this beautiful custom have died out with the mass of rubbish which encumbered or defaced the popular festivals of past times? Why should it not be revived, and made a holiday of the heart? Why should not every family on this day still unite, and expect those of its children that are gone out into the world as servants or apprentices—at least, such as are near enough to avail themselves of such a privilege—and make it a day of family reunion and affectionate enjoyment? Why

should not the young still be anxious, as we are told they used to be, in different parts of England, “*to visit their parents, and make them a present of money, a trinket, or some nice eatable?*” And why should not the ancient dish of excellent furrnety be set to welcome them on the table?

There is something so beautiful in this custom, that we know of no holiday that can in this respect compare to it. The principle embraces all that is lovely and endearing—all that is purifying and strengthening in domestic life. The love of parents; the expression of reverence for their virtues, and gratitude for all that they have done and suffered for their children; the paternal bonds, and the memory of childhood and youth in the common home—everything that can cast a charm over social life, and cherish the best impulses of our nature, meet in the celebration of this holiday. It were a thousand pities to let it perish for ever out of our usage; it is the very kind of thing that we want in this busy and stirring world.

The world is too much with us; late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers.

We are become too worldly—too commonplace—too matter-of-fact. We have stripped life of its poetry—of its simple graces and embellishments—far more than any other nation. All those beautiful customs of gathering and of scattering flowers, which make part of our written poetry, were the actual poetry of the life of our ancestors, and continue so still of the life of our continental neighbours. Nothing is said to have struck Queen Victoria so much as this fact in her German tour. With all our advantages over them, they have this great and real advantage over us—that they devote themselves more heart and soul to family *fêtes* and family enjoyments. They still throw around those simple scenes of pleasure the poetry

of nature. To stroll into the forest together, and have a dance and a simple repast there; to dine under the trees of a village inn, father, mother, children, even to the very little ones, meet with their neighbours, and enjoy music, coffee, and the sight of the young in the dance, while they talk over old times and old affections;—these are with them never-satiating pleasures. Even the bride still goes to church with a wreath of flowers on her head, and even the hearse goes to the grave garlanded with ever-greens and flowers.

Walking the other day in the cemetery of Abney Park, Stoke Newington, I observed one, amongst all the tombs there, with a wreath of everlasting reared at the foot of its marble headstone, within its little enclosure of flowers. That simple fact told me at once that it was the grave of a foreigner. I advanced to it, and read, ‘To the memory of ADOLPHINE GREIFFENHAGEN, born at Archangel, and who died in September, 1845, at Stamford Hill, aged 21; far from her home and all her relatives.’

Independent of the touching circumstances recorded by these simple and touching words, there was a sentiment about this tomb different to the sentiment of any other tomb in the cemetery. It was the continental sentiment. That sentiment of practical poetry which is still cherished by the continental nations in every-day life, but which, in this country—partly by the influence of Puritanism, and partly by that excessively trading character which has grown upon us—has been too much stripped away. Poetry with us has come to be considered as the life of books, and not as a practical part of our own life. We class it with the beautiful dreams of fairies and the days of romance, instead of ornamenting our daily path and our domestic and social festivities with it. On some few, and chiefly royal occasions, we manage to erect a

triumphal arch, or to illuminate our shops; but how few and formal are these evidences of rejoicing to those which are seen in many a French or German town, on many a far less occasion. Brilliant carpets and tapestry hung from all the windows; flowers strewn on the ground; with gay and rejoicing throngs and music—nothing can be more striking.

Yet the sentiment lives in our hearts, and is responded to where manifested. Even in this simple instance which I have mentioned, notices are placed in every direction in that cemetery to keep the walk; and they are in every other case well obeyed; but to this tomb, and all around it, the turf is trodden into a bareness that betrays the visits of a thousand curious feet.

There can be little question that it is this suppressed sentiment for the beautiful and impressive which has enabled Puseyism of late to revive superstitions and rites which the Reformation exploded. It is a sign for us to give the sentiment way; to let it take the air in its own legitimate forms; to let it ally itself with the people and their pleasures; and restore to the toiling mass some days of holiday gaiety and holiday heart. As the year advances, I shall point out what seem fitting occasions, and show how that which is beautiful in the past may reunite itself to the good in the present. And, for a March festival, what can be more appropriate than Mothering Sunday? It might be the one Sunday in the year distinguished from all others as a Sabbath holiday; one, where the young hastened home to spend a happy day with their parents and brothers and sisters, and went with them to the old church or chapel where they used to go in childhood.

What pleasant and picturesque gatherings might there be around cottage tables and in the village churchyards. What meetings of young friends and old neighbours it

would lead to. This would be bringing back a portion of the merry England of old, without trenching on one hour of the labour and gains of the new. It would be bringing back its heartiness without its superstition. Over hill and dale, through the bright streets of great towns, what millions of glad hearts would be beating on their way to the blessed reunion of home. To what thousands of mothers' hearts would the dawning of Mothering Sunday bring the sweetest sensations of the year; for on that day their children would come streaming in to at least a few hours of affectionate intercourse. On this holiday, of course, there would be no active exercises and rural sports; but round the fire of many a home would be assembled loving hearts and smiling faces.

In how many humble dwellings would be revived such scenes as Bloomfield has so admirably described in his "Richard and Kate:"—

Kate viewed her blooming daughters round,
And sons, who shook her wither'd hand;
Her features spoke what joy she found,
But utterance had made a stand.

The father's uncheck'd feelings gave
A tenderness to all he said:
"My boys, how proud I am to have
My name thus round the country spread.

"Through all my days I've laboured hard,
And could of pains and crosses tell;
But this is labour's great reward,
To meet you thus and see you well."

Thou, FILIAL PIETY, wast there,
And round the ring, benignly bright,
Dwelt in the luscious half-shed tear,
And in the parting word—*Good night!*

And why should not such scenes of FILIAL PIETY be universal? Why should not thousands of other "poor old pairs," "with thankful hearts and strengthened love," be "supremely blest" by the visits of their children on

one Sunday in the year, sacred to parental affection? Not even the poverty of England should prevent that; for every youth and maiden might carry in their hand the necessary little contribution to the cost of the feast; and then assuredly *Mothering Sunday* would be one of the happiest and holiest days in the English year.

THE SABBATH.

What spell has o'er the populous city past?

The wonted current of its life is staid;

Its sports, its schemes of gain, are earthward cast,

As though their emptiness were now displayed.

The roar of trade has ceased, and on the air

Come holy songs and solemn sounds of prayer.

Far spreads the charm; from every hamlet spire

A note of rest and heavenward thought is peal'd.

By his calm hearth reclines the peasant sire;

The toil-worn steed basks in the breezy field.

Within, without, through farm and cottage blest,

'Tis one bright day of gladness and of rest.

Down from their mountain dwellings, whilst the dew

Shines on the heath-bells, and the fern is bending

In the fresh breeze, in festive garbs I view

Childhood and age, and buoyant youth descending.

God! who hast piled thy wonders round their home,

'Tis to thy temple in their love they come.

A stately ship speeds o'er the mighty main—

Oh! many a league from our own happy land;

Yet from its deck ascends the choral strain,

For there its little, isolated band,

Amid the ocean deserts' ceaseless roar,

Praise Him whose love links shore to distant shore.

O'er palmy woods, where summer radiance falls,

In the glad islands of the Indian main,

What thronging crowds the missionary calls,

To raise to heaven the Christian's glorious strain!

Lo! where, engirt by children of the sun,

Stands the white man, and counts his victories won.

Through the fierce deserts of a distant zone,

'Mid savage nations, terrible and stern,

A lonely atom, severed from his own,

The traveller goes, death or renown to earn.

Parched, fasting, fainting, verging to despair,

He kneels, he prays, hope kindles in his prayer.

O'er the wide world, blest day, thine influence flies;
Rest o'er the sufferer spreads her balmy wings;
Love wakes, joy dawns, praise fills the listening skies;
The expanding heart from earth's enchantment springs.
Heaven, for one day, withdraws its ancient ban,
Unbars its gates, and dwells once more with man.

NOOKS OF ENGLAND—SINGULAR SECTS.

The Sabbath leads us naturally to the modes in which it is celebrated, and to the fact that, amongst the innumerable phases of life, in what the Germans would call many-sided England, none are more numerous or curious than the religious ones. The freedom of opinion in this country has in nothing shown itself more than in the free adoption of all sorts of religious peculiarities. They who move only amongst one class, and whose religious caution prevents them exploring the interior of other classes of believers, can form no conception of the strange scenes, personages, and opinions, which surround them. I have wandered over this country more, I believe, than any man of my time. I have gone on foot into many of its nooks and back settlements, where there was little chance of getting by any other means. I have entered the houses of the people, and conversed familiarly with them; visited their workshops and their places of recreation; sat with the shepherd on the mountain or the heath; stood with the woodmen at their work, and slept beneath the humblest and most smoky of roofs, often where the men of the neighbourhood have assembled at evening around the fire of the village or the road-side alehouse, and talked of all the doings of the country-side. Of the fruits [of these rambles, some are to be found in my "Rural Life of England," and others in my "Visits to Remarkable Places." It would, however, be difficult to exhaust the stores of memory in these publications; and there now occur to me

some curious facts respecting the strange sects and their strange preachers that I have come across, that will tend to illustrate the rural life of England, and which will not be out of place in this particular portion of my work.

None but those who have thus penetrated into the obscurities of the country can form any idea of what is going on in a religious point of view. We hear of the wild extravagances of the American sects, Millerites, Mormonites, and the like. They scarcely surpass in singularity what is going on at our own doors. It was thought odd when a Millerite was reminded a day or two after the world ought to have been destroyed—according to the positive prophecy of their apostle—that it was not come to pass, that he replied, “very likely the Almighty reckons by the old style; and so it will come yet.” It is not odder than things that you may hear at any camp meeting of Ranters in the country. It is not stranger than the sight of no less than half a dozen congregations, such as you may have seen on a summer’s Sunday evening, all at the same moment, engaged in worship in the open air on Hunslet-heath, near Leeds, or other such place in the manufacturing districts. Nothing can be more strange than the doctrines and the imagery you may hear on such occasions.

There would require a new and very much enlarged edition of Evans’s “Sketches of the Various Denominations of Religious Professions in this Country,” to give us any adequate idea of them. In the most carefully-guarded forms of religious association, such is the force of opinion that we have a number of varieties. Even in the Church of England we have the high and low church parties; Evangelicals and Puseyites. The Independents, we believe, are too independent to break into parties, but each congregation is a church. The Unitarians have five or six shades.

The Baptists are Pædo and Anabaptists. The Methodists are Calvinistic, or Whitfieldite; Old, or Wesleyan; New, or Kilhamite; Primitive, or Ranter, Warrenite, Bryanite, and Thornite. The Quakers are orthodox, evangelical, and Hicksite; and then there are Swedenborgians, Irvingites, Mormonites, Southcottians, Plymouth Brethren, and a number of other sects of partial prevalence or obscure tenets. These are the more known or obvious sects, but you can scarcely go into any part of England but you find a sect peculiar to it.

THE LIVER BY FAITH.

In different and very distant parts of the country, I have met a worthy old man—a wandering preacher—a sort of self-constituted, self-sent, solitary missionary. He had no settled audience, and belonged to no society; he appeared to be a man of profound piety, and the most Nathaniel-like simplicity of mind. On whatever subject any one entered into conversation with him, he invariably led the discourse to the importance of religion. I have been surprised, and even startled, on moving from one part of the country to another, immediately in my walks to meet this old man. When I questioned him as to his object there, it was “to seek souls;” and as to his source of support, his invariable reply was, that he “lived by faith.” I observed, however, that his faith led him to good houses, and that the child-like old man had, in fact, many homes in the mansions of the religious rich throughout the kingdom, where he was held in esteem and reverence, such as no doubt followed the prophets of old. I have heard that “this Israelite indeed” has now been dead some years.

THE MYSTERIOUS PREACHER.

In one of those strolls which I have always loved to

take into different and little frequented parts of these kingdoms, I also fell in with a venerable old man, dressed in black, with very white hair, and of a mild, somewhat melancholy and intelligent look. It was a beautiful scene where I first encountered him—in a wood, on the banks of a noble river. I accosted the old man with a remark on the delightfulness of the time and place; and he replied to my observations with a warmth, and in a tone, which strongly affected me. I soon found that he was as enthusiastic a lover of nature as myself—that he had seen many of the finest portions of the kingdom, and had wandered through them with Milton or Shakspeare, Herbert or Quarles, in his hand. He was one of those who, reading with his own eyes and heart, and not through the spectacles of critics, had not been taught to despise the last old poet, nor to treat his rich and quaint versification, and his many manly and noble thoughts, as the conceits and rhymes of a poetaster. His reverence for the great names of our literature, and his just appreciation of their works, won upon me greatly. I invited him to continue his walk; and—so well was I pleased with him—to visit me at my rustic lodgment.

From that day, for some weeks, we daily walked together. I more and more contemplated with admiration and esteem the knowledge, the fine taste, the generous sentiments, the profound love of nature which seemed to fill the whole being of the old man. But who and whence was he? He said not a word on that subject, and I did not, therefore, feel freedom to inquire. He might have secret griefs, which such a query might awaken. I respect too much the wounded heart of humanity carelessly to probe it, and especially the heart of a solitary being who, in the downward stage of life,

may, perchance, be the stripped and scathed remnant of a once-endearing family. He stood before me alone. He entered into reminiscences, but they were reminiscences connected with no near ties; but had such ties now existed, he would in some hour of frank enthusiasm have said so. He did not say it, and it was, therefore, sufficiently obvious that he had a history which he left down in the depths of his heart, beyond the vision of all but that heart itself. And yet, whatever were the inward memories of this venerable man, there was a buoyancy and youthfulness of feeling about him which amply manifested that they had not quenched the love and enjoyment of life in him.

On different days we took, during the most beautiful spring, strolls of many miles into distant dales and villages, and on the wild brown moors. Now we sate by a moorland stream, talking of many absorbing things in the history of the poetry and the religion of our country, and I could plainly see that my ancient friend had in him the spirit of an old Covenanter, and that, had he lived in the days of contest between the church of kings and the church of God, he would have gone to the field or the stake for his faith as triumphantly as any martyr of those times. It was under the influence of one of these conversations that I could not avoid addressing to the old man the following youthful stanzas, which, though they may exhibit little poetry, testify to the patriotism which his language inspired:—

My friend! there have been men
To whom we turn again
After contemplating the present age,
And long, with vain regret,
That they were living yet
Virtue's high war triumphantly to wage.

Men whose renown was built
 Not on resplendent guilt—
 Not through life's waste, or the abuse of power;
 But by the dauntless zeal
 With which, at truth's appeal,
 They stood unto the death in some eventful hour.

But he who now shall deem,
 Because amongst us seem
 No dubious symptoms of a realm's decline,—
 Wealth blind with its excess
 'Mid far diffused distress,
 And pride that kills, professing to refine,—

He who deems hence shall flow
 The utter overthrow
 Of this most honoured and long happy land,
 Little knows what there lies
 Even beneath his eyes,
 Slumbering in forms that round about him stand.

Little knows he the zeal
 Myriads of spirits feel
 In love, pure principle, and knowledge strong;
 Little knows he what men
 Tread this dear land again,
 Whose souls of fire invigorate the throng.

My friend! I lay with thee
 Beneath the forest tree,
 When spring was shedding her first sweets around,
 And the bright sky above
 Woke feelings of deep love,
 And thoughts which travelled through the blue profound.

I lay, and as I heard—
 The joyful faith thus stirred,
 Shot like Heaven's lightning through my wondering breast;
 I heard, and in my thought
 Glory and greatness wrought,
 And blessing God—my native land I blest!

Now we entered a village inn, and eat our simple luncheon; and now we stood in some hamlet lane, or by its mossy well, with a group of children about us, amongst whom not a child appeared more child-like or more delighted than the old man. Nay, as we came back from a

fifteen or twenty miles' stroll, he would leap over a stile with the activity of a boy, or run up to a wilding bush, covered with its beautiful pink blossoms, and breaking off a branch hold it up in admiration, and declare that it appeared almost sinful for an old man like him to enjoy himself so keenly. I know not when I more deeply felt the happiness and the holiness of existence, the wealth of intellect, and the blessings of our fancies, sympathies, and affection, than I used to do as this singular stranger sate with me on the turf-seat at the vine-covered end of the old cottage, which then made my temporary residence, on the serene evenings of that season, over our rustic tea-table, and with the spicy breath of the wall-flowers of that little garden breathing around us, and held conversation on many a subject of moral and intellectual speculation which then deeply interested me. In some of those evening hours he at length gave me glimpses into his past existence. Things more strange and melancholy than I could ever have suspected had passed over him, and only the more interested me in him.

Such had been our acquaintance for some months, when, one evening, happening to be in the neighbouring town, and passing through a densely-populated part of it, I saw a number of people crowding into a chapel. With my usual curiosity in all that relates to the life, habits, and opinions of my fellow-men, I entered, and was no little surprised to behold my ancient friend in the pulpit. As I believed he had not observed me enter, and as I was desirous to hear my worthy friend, thus most unexpectedly found in this situation, without attracting his attention, I therefore seated myself in the shade of a pillar, and awaited the sermon. My surprise, as I listened to it, was excessive, on more accounts than one. I was surprised at

the intense, fervid, and picturesque blaze of eloquence that breathed forth from the preacher, seeming to light up the whole place, and fill it with an unearthly and cloudy fire. I was more astonished by the singularity and wildness of the sentiments uttered. I looked again and again at the rapt and ecstatic preacher. His frame seemed to expand, and to be buoyed up, by his glowing enthusiasm, above the very height of humanity. His hair, white as snow, seemed a pale glory burning round his head, and his countenance, warm with the expression of his entranced spirit, was molten into the visage of a pleading seraph, who saw the terrors of the Divinity revealed before him, and felt only that they for whom he wrestled were around him. *They* hung upon that awful and unearthly countenance with an intensity which, in beings at the very bar of eternal judgment, hanging on the advocacy of an angel, could scarcely have been exceeded; and when he ceased, and sat down, a sigh, as from every heart at once, went through the place, which marked the fall of their rapt imaginations from the high region whither his words and expressive features had raised them to the dimness and reality of earth. I could scarcely persuade myself that this was my late friend of the woods and fields, and of the evening discourse, so calm and dispassionate, over our little tea-table.

I escaped cautiously with the crowd, and eagerly interrogated a man who passed out near me who was the preacher? He looked at me with an air of surprise; but seeing me a stranger, he said he thought I could not have been in those parts long, or I should have known Mr. M——. I then learned that my venerable acquaintance was one whose name was known far and wide—known for the strange and fascinating powers of his

pulpit eloquence, and for the peculiarity of his religious views. The singularity of those notions alone had prevented his becoming one of the most popular religious orators of his time. They had been the source of perpetual troubles and persecutions to him; they had estranged from him the most zealous of his friends from time to time; yet they were such only as he could lay down at the threshold of Divine judgment; and still, wherever he went, although they were a root of bitterness to him in private, he found in public a crowd of eager and enthusiastic hearers, who hung on his words as if they came at once warm from the inner courts of heaven.

The sense of this discovery, and of the whole strange scene of the last evening, hung powerfully upon me through the following day. I sat on the bench of my cottage window, with a book in my hand, the greater part of it, but my thoughts continually reverted to the image of the preacher in the midst of his audience; when, at evening, in walked the old man with his usual quiet smile, and shaking me affectionately by the hand, sat down in a wooden chair opposite me. I looked again and again, but in vain, to recognise the floating figure and the exalted countenance of the evening.

The old man took up my book, and began to read. A sudden impulse seized me which I haven ever ceased to regret. I did not wish abruptly to tell the old man that I had seen him in the pulpit, but I longed to discuss with him the ground of his peculiar views, and said,

“What do you think, my friend, of the actual future destiny of the ——?”

I made the question include his peculiar doctrines. He laid down the volume with a remarkable quickness of action. He gazed at me for a moment with a look

humbled but not confused, such as I had never seen in him before, and, in a low voice said,

“You were then at my chapel last night?”

“I was,” I replied.

“I am sorry—I am sorry,” he said, rising, with a sigh.

“It has been a pleasant time, but it is ended. Good-bye, my dear young friend, and may God bless you!”

He turned silently but quickly away.

“Stop!” I cried. “Stop!” But he heard or heeded not. I ran to the gate to lay hold on him, and assure him that his sentiments would not alter my regard for him, but I observed him already hastening down the lane at such a speed that I judged it rude and useless at that moment to pursue.

I went down that day to his lodgings, to assure him of my sentiments towards him, but door and window were closed, and if he were in he would not hear me. Early next morning a little ragged boy brought me a note, saying a gentleman in the lane had given it to him. It simply said:—

“Dear young friend, good-bye. You wonder at my abruptness; but my religion has always been fatal to my friendship. You will say it would not with you: so has many another assured me; but I am too well schooled by bitter experience. I have had a call to a distant place. No one knows of it, and I trust the name to no one. The pleasure of your society has detained me, or I had obeyed the call a month ago. May we meet in heaven!—C. M.”

He was actually gone, and no one knew whither.

Time had passed over, and I had long imagined this strange and gifted being in his grave, when in a wild and remote part of the kingdom, the other day, I accidentally stumbled upon his retreat, and found him in his pulpit

with the same rapt aspect, uttering an harangue as exciting, and surrounded by an audience as eagerly devouring his words.

BRYANITES AND THORNITES.

I have been much struck, as every stranger must be who traverses that singular county, with the religious people of Cornwall. John Wesley laboured long and zealously amongst its swarming, and then half-wild population. He was rudely treated by them on many occasions; but at length he succeeded in gaining an ascendancy over them, and civilised and christianised a vast number of them. Nothing is more striking in that populous county of mines than the still abounding number of Methodists. Where there is no church there is sure to be a Methodist chapel; and where there is a church there is a chapel twice as big.

If you chance to be crossing one of their grey moors in an evening, amongst the cottages so numerous scattered over them, you are continually coming to one in which a prayer-meeting is holding; and it is curious to pause and peep in at the little window, and see the hut so jammed full of people that it seems ready to burst. There is the fire, and the old dresser, and shelves, with its rows of plates shining in the fire-light, and all the rest is one mass of bowed heads, while some one is pouring forth a most zealous supplication, responded to by exclamations and groans as zealous. On most occasions you may hear language and metaphoric illustrations, which nothing but the mother-soil and pure growth of the district and people could give birth to.

“Brother!” exclaimed one of those rude miners, as I stopped a moment in passing such a hut; “brother, how excellent a thing is prayer! How often have we kneeled

down with hearts as hard as the bricks under our knees, and spirits as dry as the dust in the chinks between them, and presently we have risen up half way in the Lord!"

I was lying one Sunday on the top of an old stone wall, near Boscastle, protecting myself from the sun, partly with my umbrella, and partly by the shade of a small tree—which, by a rare chance, happened to be growing on that treeless coast—when two young men passed me, and gave me a passing salutation. I looked at them, and made myself certain that they were Ranters, or Primitive Methodists, as they are called in the midland counties. They had on blue coats without collars, and broad-brimmed hats, having a certain resemblance to the Quaker costume, but yet never to be mistaken *for* the Quaker costume. As the female Methodist dresses much like a female Friend, yet, by a knowing eye, can never be confounded with the female Friend—the colours and materials of her dress, as well as some particular cross-plaits in the crown of her bonnet, betraying the difference.

Wishing to learn something of the numbers of the Primitive Methodists down there, I quickly got up and followed them. I soon found that they *were* Methodists, and going to preach in two villages not far off; but when I asked them if they were Primitive Methodists, they said—

“ Primitive Methodists, sir; what are Primitive Methodists?”

“ Oh, Ranters, I mean—we call them Ranters.”

“ Ranters, sir; what are Ranters?”

“ What, don't you know what Ranters are?”

“ No, sir.”

“ Then, what do you call yourselves?”

“ Oh, we are Bryanites, sir.”

“ And what are Bryanites? In what do you differ from the Wesleyan Methodists?”

“ Oh, we don't differ at all, sir; we are all one, sir.”

“ Then why *do* you differ?”

“ Why, Mr. Bryan did not exactly agree with the Conference, and so he left the old connexion; and so we followed Mr. Bryan.”

“ A little farther on, I saw a great number of people pouring out of a chapel; and I stopped, and addressing a little knot of them, said—

“ Well, I suppose you are Bryanites?”

“ No, sir, we are Thurnites.” (Thornites.)

“ Oh, and pray what are Thornites? In what do you differ from the Bryanites?”

“ Oh, we don't differ at all, sir; we are all one, sir.”

Then I again asked—“ Why *do* you differ?”

“ Oh, Mr. Thurn left Mr. Bryan, and so we followed Mr. Thurn.”

“ Really! that was it? I suppose you read your Bible?”

“ Yes, sir! oh, yes, sir!”

“ Well, there is one tenet that I wonder you have not happened to meet with.”

“ What is that, sir?”

“ Why, ‘ Some are for Paul, and some for Apollos, and some for Cephas, but I am for Jesus Christ.’ You seem to be following after your preachers and not after principles.”

“ Oh, very good, sir—all very good, sir.”

And so I left these very acquiescing Thornites, wondering what John Wesley would have made of them.

MULOCKITES.

If the fame of Bryanites and Thornites has not reached many of my more northern readers, possibly that of the

Mulockites may. Lord Byron in his Journal tells us, that a certain Mr. Mulock had called on him at Pisa, and "endeavoured to convert him to some new kind of Christianity."

This Mr. Thomas Mulock is, or was, a gentleman of good family and education. I think he had been private secretary to George Canning, and had the best prospects. He wrote poetry of no mean order, and forsaking his connexion with Canning, and his brighter worldly prospects, had lectured on English literature in most of the capitals of Europe. In Paris he had ventured to speak so plainly his opinion of the character and career of Bonaparte, that some officers who had served under him sent the lecturer word, that, if he repeated such sentiments, they would feel obliged to call him to account. On receiving this message he repeated the lecture verbatim, read the letter, and treated it as a threat of assassination. The man had evidently no lack of nerve; and had his religious creed been as passable as it was boldly maintained, his "new kind of Christianity" might have become popular. As it was, he at one time fixed on the densely-populated Staffordshire Potteries as the theatre of his religious campaign; and there he for a season made a great noise. We were told much of this extraordinary man, and, accordingly, we went to hear him. The scene was such only as could be met with in England or America.

The place of worship was a large upper room in a china factory. The people of that district can only have a familiar idea of the kind of room. It was, perhaps, thirty or forty yards long, and ten or a dozen wide, and of proportionate height. Its walls were bare and whitewashed. In this great naked room, about half-way from each end, and near the wall, between two windows, stood the apostle of this "new kind of Christianity," at what served him

at once for reading-desk and bookcase. This was no other than a three-legged, round, deal table, such as you see in common public-houses, and upon this a large deal box, with a bit of green-baize laid on it. In this box, which was set on its side, so that the lid opened towards him, was kept his hymn-book and his candles. About fifty people formed his audience, ten at least of whom were ladies of known wealth and of elegant appearance; the rest were potters in their working clothes, with their wives and children. This curious congregation were seated on benches made of planks supported on piles of bricks; and the chandeliers which lighted the room were of an equally original and ornate description. They consisted of two laths each, nailed crosswise, suspended from the ceiling by a piece of string, and having three nails driven in near each end of the laths, to form sockets for the candles.

In the midst of this great room, thus singularly furnished, stood Thomas Mulock at his unique reading-desk. He was a young man of gentlemanly and even handsome person, of about the middle size. He was clad in a blue dress-coat, with gilt buttons, a buff kerseymere waistcoat, which at that period was much worn, and white trousers. His linen was beautifully fine and clean; his hands adorned with rings, and delicately formed; and, altogether, he irresistibly reminded you of Coleridge, when he also preached in a similar costume, that he "might not have a rag of the woman of Babylon on him."

The discourse of Mr. Mulock was a most rambling harangue of the rankest antinomianism. He plainly informed you that "he was the man, and that wisdom would die with him." According to him, all the world was lying in ignorance, and that light from Heaven had fallen only

on his head. You were led almost to believe that, since the day of the apostles, nobody had even got a glimpse of the true faith till it was revealed to Thomas Mulock. It was certain that nobody at that time knew what real Christianity was but himself. He assured us that all the preachers—the Christian world, so called, all over—were preaching what they did not understand; and all the missionaries, to every region of the globe, were running before they were sent, and on a business which they knew nothing about. The only honest man that he had heard preach was the clergyman of Stoke, where he was then preaching, who candidly confessed that he “knew not God.”

Mr. Mulock did not inform us why Christianity, after having once been delivered to the saints, was again made a sealed and unintelligible book for so many ages, until the coming of this blue-coated prophet; nor why he, who alone could comprehend its mysteries, was there to be found preaching to about threescore persons, while so many ignorant pretenders were running to and fro in the earth, and deluding so many millions with false intelligence; but he was exceedingly personal in his remarks on the steward of some nobleman in the neighbourhood, to whom he had offered his “new kind of Christianity,” and who had proved as intractable as Lord Byron.

When he had concluded his discourse, a working potter, a very tall man, in his long white apron, knelt down and prayed that our hearts might be changed; that our old hearts might be taken away, and new ones given us. But the poor fellow, notwithstanding he had been in his prayer full of thanksgiving to God that such “a burning and shining light” as Thomas Mulock had been sent among them, had no sooner resumed his seat, than up got “the burning and shining light,” and gave the poor

man a most severe castigation "with the rod of his mouth."

He expressed his most unfeigned astonishment at the blindness of the human understanding, and the stupidity of the human heart. He declared that never was there a more striking instance of the utter uselessness of preaching; and that all exertions were vain till it pleased the Almighty to send his grace into the soul; for here had he been for a long period teaching and explaining the real nature of the Christian religion, and now he heard a prayer put up that our hearts might be changed. Had he not told them a hundred times that our hearts never could be changed; that our old hearts could never be taken away? A new heart might be given us, but the old heart, the old Adam's heart, would still remain within us, and be perpetually endeavouring to corrupt the new heart.

The poor potter looked down in humiliation at this reproof; and the ladies wept bitter tears over such an awful instance of human obfuscation of mind.

Mr. Mulock, we believe, grew to be greatly admired in that neighbourhood; married richly—probably to one of the weeping ladies; had a handsome chapel built for him; but we have since heard something of his acquiring a number of disciples at Oxford, and of a riot there, occasioned by him or his disciples preaching up a community of wives, or some such nonsense; of their being pursued to the outskirts of the town, and some of them in danger of their lives, from being thrown over the bridge into the river. We have also heard a rumour of this teacher of a "new kind of Christianity" becoming an inmate of one of those strongholds—those asylums for genius of the wild school—towards which his character of mind, we thought, pretty plainly pointed when we heard him.

WILLIAM THEOBALD, THE QUAKER SWEDENBORGIAN.

Some years ago, I had an old man in my employ who was a perfect specimen of the picturesque both in body and mind. He was tall, lean and bony. He had been, the greater part of his life, a Quaker; and to the day of his death he wore the Quaker costume in its most perfect primevality—his broad hat half cock and half slouch; his drab coat of an ample length and breadth of skirts; his drab waistcoat, with flaps of such liberal dimensions that they afforded room for pockets as large as those in most men's coats; his drab breeches, fastened at the knees with buckles; his neat grey worsted stockings, and capacious shoes clasped with large steel buckles. At one time he had been baker at Ackworth School—the great Quaker school in the north of England; at another, coachman to a very quaint and eccentric Friend; and in the course of his life he had picked up a good many shrewd notions and racy phrases of his own. He was noted amongst his acquaintance for a man of “a large religious experience.” I once casually overheard him conversing with a youth, who seemed, from his remarks, to be a little sceptical, or who was desirous to call the old fellow out on his favourite topics.

“William,” said he, “don't you think it is all an overweening conceit that makes us fancy there is to be an eternity for us?”

“No,” replied William; “it is our stupidity that makes us doubt it. We are poor creatures, Edward—we are poor creatures; we cannot open our hearts wide enough to comprehend God's goodness, and so we libel it. Put me this great jug into that tea-cup.”

“Yes,” said Edward, “do that yourself, William; it’s past my skill.”

“Well, then, put me the sky into the crown of my hat.”

“Ah,” said Edward, laughing, “that’s rather better. Yours is no trifle of a hat, William, certainly; but it won’t hold the sky—that’s rather broader than your brim.”

“Then,” said William, “how is such a little head as thine to hold the idea of the love of God towards his creatures, which, like God himself, the heaven of heavens cannot contain.”

“But,” said Edward, “what kind of a thing do you suppose a spirit is? Do you imagine it a blue, thinnish thing, like a mist, or a smoke that you could see through? What shall we be like, think you, William?”

“Like!—why, I tell thee, *the spirit is the real man*. We shall be like what we are. What thou seest is only the shell—the husk of the man; the spirit is the real man.”

“What!” exclaimed the captious youngster, “do you expect to rise, William, with your Quaker coat and hat on?—with your cough, rheumatism, asthma, and all?”

“No! no! thank God!—no asthma. I expect delightful breathing on the heavenly plains; but I cannot drive it into thee that all these things are as much husk as my old coat. The spirit is the actual man; and when I rise, I count upon looking just as I do now,” said the tall, old man, rearing himself up to his full height, and clapping his hands down the sides of his thighs, as a soldier at the word “attention!”—“only rather younger,” added he, gravely, “and a little handsomer.”

Here ended this psychological dialogue; for the young man burst out laughing at William’s grotesquely solemn

image, and, apparently very much tickled with his counting upon being "rather younger and a little handsomer," ran off, saying, "Well, that's a good un, however."

What was my surprise, a few days afterwards, having a curiosity to hear the preaching of the Swedenborgians, or New Jerusalemers, on going, on a Sunday afternoon, into their place of worship—a curious little chapel in a very intricate mass of buildings—to behold my old man, William, sitting in the pulpit with his hat on, as a preaching Friend sits in the gallery of his own meeting. I never had the slightest suspicion that William went anywhere but to the Friends' meetings, much less that he was a preacher. But it appeared that he had long been a Swedenborgian, and a preacher amongst them too; and this on the most amusing plea—that Friends and Swedenborgians were all alike in doctrine! Friends, who put down all "high and soaring imaginations;" who put human reason and all flights of fancy under their feet; and who, in sitting down to worship in their meetings, feel bound to drive all their own thoughts out of their minds with the whip of sharpest abstraction—sugar-hogsheads, bales of cotton, bill-broking, banking, stock-jobbing, or whatever else of profitable or seductive reign over them all the rest of the week. Friends! and the followers of Emanuel Swedenborg, who believed in, and taught the practicability of walking out of the body, by the power of faith, at will;* who entered, at pleasure, that wide region which lies between human life and heaven, where spirits, good and bad, await their final doom; who saw the processions of souls who had just left the body, marching along this spiritual land, actually unconscious that they had passed through death, and cast off

* See his works.

the flesh, till they arrived at the end of a certain highway, and found a river or a marsh, which flesh could not pass without sinking, but over which they were impelled, to their own amazement, and then became conscious that they were no longer in the body.

Whether William's asthma, and the expectation of "delightful breathing," when walking forth out of the body, had led him to join the Swedenborgians, I know not, but he most summarily, on my afterwards inquiring, explained the identity of this fanciful theory and Quakerism by saying, "Why, thou seest, both George Fox and Emanuel Swedenborg believed that the whole of religion consists in 'exercising the power of the spirit through faith, and that all short of that is nothing but swine's husks and beggarly elements.'"

William, I found, had so much influence amongst these Swedenborgians, that they permitted him to retain his own peculiar customs. He sate in meeting with his hat on, and refused to give out hymns; and a most ludicrous medley of Quakerism and New Jerusalemism he was.

On this occasion I was exceedingly diverted to see how he contrived to get over the Quaker objections to taking a text for his sermon. On opening the Bible, he cried out "Here goes for the starting-place, being the 12th chapter and 2nd verse of Paul's second epistle to the Corinthians. 'I knew a man in Christ, about fourteen years ago, whether in the body I cannot tell, or whether out of the body I cannot tell; God knoweth. Such an one caught up to the third heaven.'"

THE ROEITES.

The last of the local sects which I shall notice here is the sect of the Roeites.

Calverton, a retired village in Nottinghamshire, has had

the distinction of producing two men whose names have travelled beyond its own boundaries. Lee, a gentleman, who, having paid his addresses to a young woman who maintained herself by knitting fine stockings, and being refused by her, vowed that he would invent a machine that should spoil her trade for ever, and, therefore, never ceased beating his brain till he had produced the stocking-frame, and given birth to the staple trade of Nottingham, Derby, and Leicester; and John Roe, a cottager, who made himself the apostle of a new sect, which, however, never spread beyond his own village, yet, we believe, continues to exist there.

John Roe was disgusted with the religions he made himself acquainted with, and still looking about for one to which he could join himself, he spied out the Quakers. He greatly admired all those of their customs which asserted a freedom from the Establishment; but he did not see the reasonableness of other of their practices. He therefore set about to form a new sect, to be styled the Reformed Quakers. John and his disciples resolved to marry and bury amongst themselves, as the Quakers did, but they soon found that they wanted the legal authority which the Quakers had obtained long before. The parish authorities required them to give security that their children should not become chargeable; but they refused to do anything of the kind, asserting that they only did as the Quakers did, and, like them, would suffer anything that the magistrates might please to inflict, rather than implicate one atom of religious liberty. The consequence was that John, and the chief members of his church, soon found themselves in Nottingham Gaol. There they continued some years, maintaining their testimony, as George Fox would have called it, as stubbornly as he could have done. Eventually they wore out the patience of the

magistrates, who were glad to get rid of them as well as they could. They were therefore informed that the prison doors were open, and that they might walk out at their pleasure. But no; like Paul and Silas of old, they said, "The magistrates have put us in here, and they shall come and fetch us out."

John and his fellow-martyrs triumphed. The magistrates were fain to go and make themselves very agreeable, and request the holy apostles of religion and matrimony most politely to do them the favour to adjourn from those walls which they had so long honoured with their presence, to their own dwellings and their desiring friends at Calverton, which very civil request John and his brethren were pleased to grant, and issued forth with due dignity exactly at noonday.

Having read this account in "Gough's History of the Quakers," or "Walker's Geography," or some such book, many years afterwards, and learning that John Roe was still living, and illuminating Calverton with his doctrine, I walked over there one Sunday, and inquired for the chapel of the Roeites.

"Roeites?—Roeites?" said a young farmer. "Oh, I know whom you mean. You mean the *Deformed* Quakers. I'll go with you to the chapel."

To the chapel we went; and if John's disciples could be said to resemble Quakers at all, the young man's designatory epithet was not an inapt one. The scene was such as none but those who have peeped a little into the nooks of the world, could imagine to exist in England.

The chapel was a barn, standing in a very retired corner, amongst the village orchards, and half-hidden by their trees. The holes and slits in the walls, which are left in barns to admit air, had been built up, and doors

and windows introduced. Within it had all the attributes of a very plain chapel—its loft, its pulpit, and its seats; not the least resemblance, however, to a Friends' meeting-house. My guide conducted me to the loft, where I could see the whole congregation, and exactly opposite to John Roe's pulpit. The congregation consisted of about thirty people; but John Roe was not yet arrived. My guide, the young farmer, having seen me seated, laid his head very deliberately on the front of the loft, and began in a short period to give evidence that he was fast asleep, by a most unequivocal snore. I shook him, and asked him if he knew where he was. He said "Yes; I have been here before;" and so laid down his head and resumed his doze. It was a sultry day in July, and the greater part of the congregation seemed similarly disposed.

Presently a loud peal of thunder, and the dashing of some large drops of rain on the windows, seemed to arouse all the sleepers, and just then in walked John Roe and his wife.

I would give something now for a sketch of them at that instant, for two such picturesque objects, to a certainty, are not now to be met with. John was a rather small man, with a most venerable aspect. He could not be less than eighty years of age. His hair was long, as white as snow, and combed in flowing locks on his shoulders. He was clad in the old-fashioned garb, which, no doubt, even in that hidden village, was old-fashioned when he was a lad; the most conspicuous part of which was his drab coat, cut with a broad square collar, and with very long and ample skirts, and adorned with plated buttons of the size of dollars. His wife was a tall woman, apparently not more than sixty, and must have been a fine woman, too, in her day. She had a mob cap, and a

black silk gipsy bonnet, with the crown not more than two inches deep, secured on the top of her head. Her tall and well-fitting stays, while they gave her a remarkably long and taper waist, stood up high above her bosom; and her gown was a chintz of a large flowing pattern, each side drawn up through the pocket-holes, that it might not dangle in the wet of the thunder-shower, or to show, perhaps, as it did, a heavily quilted black silk petticoat. Black stockings, high-heeled shoes, and large buckles, completed her costume.

John Roe advanced slowly into the middle of the chapel floor, and looked round on his people with an air of as much dignity and self-complacency as that with which the most popular preacher could survey the most crowded and splendid assembly, or as that with which an archbishop could look on a titled crowd assembled to hear him in Westminster Abbey. While he made this dignified circumspection, his wife, with as much evident pride, shook the thunder-drops from the skirts of his coat, wiped them from his shoulders with her handkerchief, and then John ascended into the pulpit. There was now a great bustle with the production of hymn-books. A man with a pitch-pipe gave out the hymn, and blew a note loud enough to wake all sleepers; and we had vocal music, *con fuoco*, enough. Then some one below gave us a prayer and another hymn; after which John opened his big Bible and began, not a sermon, but a running commentary on the transfiguration. But if the commentary was a running one, it soon brought most of the people to a stop. I must confess that I could make neither head nor tail of his discourse. Something he said of "a voice out of a cloud;" but his voice was like nothing but a voice in a cloud; and of "another and a truer word of prophecy." And he asked us whether we

thought this voice was the truer word of prophecy, or whether we were to look for another; but he did not answer the question, and scarcely anybody was awake to answer for themselves.

The heat of the day, and the droning of the old man's voice, had comfortably composed the congregation. I looked round, and could not avoid smiling at the scene. Out of the thirty persons present, twenty at least were sound asleep. They were "a' noddin'."

By John's pulpit were ranged two seats, on which sat the chief singers. Thereabouts, the only man awake was the man with the pitch-pipe. He was actively looking out in his book for the next hymn, which, having found, he began to bob those before him lustily on their backs with his thumb, to call their attention to the place; most of whom, being thus rudely aroused from their sleep, gave a great start, and one very nearly pitched forward upon the floor. Behind these two seats was a third, considerably elevated, and fastened to the wall. On this, close to the pulpit, and conspicuous to all the assembly—when awake—sate a stout countryman in a dark velveteen jacket, with a red handkerchief about his neck, the ends of which dangled down his breast, about a foot in length. By his side sate his son, a great lad of twelve or fourteen years of age; he was fast asleep, with the back of his head against the wall, his mouth wide open, and his head performing a regular rolling on the wall from one shoulder to the other. Presently, his father observing his condition, gave him a sharp jog in the side with his elbow, and as he opened his astonished eyes, he slyly drew from his waistcoat pocket a large apple, and thrust it into the lad's hand. The lad raised himself up with a great stare, rubbed first one eye and then the other with his coat-sleeve, making the most extraordinary grimaces with his

mouth at the same time; deposited the apple in his pocket, laid his head against the wall, and away it went rolling to and fro as before. Sleep now reigned triumphant; the young farmer snoring gloriously at my elbow, and resisting every attempt to rouse him; and the voice of John Roe droning on as drowsily as an old mill-wheel.

Luckily, at this moment, a swallow flew in at an open window. Twit! twit! went the swallow. The sight and sound were music to some lads who happened to awake. Up started one, and snatched at the bird; up went the hat of another, with a circling sweep, to catch it. The alarmed creature twitted louder and louder, and flew to and fro with the utmost rapidity; the boys were all in motion; the people awoke at the bustle; John stopped his droning; even the young farmer's snoring snapped off at once; the pitch-pipe blew lustily the key-note; and another vigorously chanted hymn restored us all to ourselves and to the open air.

I made some inquiries amongst John's people as to their peculiar tenets, but I could learn nothing distinctive; all was as cloudy as John's discourse, only that they were *Reformed* Quakers, and would marry and bury themselves. I was told in the village that John's society had been greatly checked in its growth, by the simple fact of a widow, one of his hearers, having lent him a considerable sum of money, not on his note, but on his word—such was her faith—who, on applying for repayment, was coolly told by him, “That the Lord commanded the children of Israel to borrow of the Egyptians all that they could, but gave no commandment to pay them again.”

“What!” said the old dame, “do you make an Egyptian of me?”

“What!” said others of his disciples, “does he make Egyptians of us?”

And the society began rapidly to diminish. Yet this singular little sect cannot have existed in that village much less than a century; and though John Roe has long been dead, I am told his mantle has fallen on other shoulders, and that the Roeites may still be found in the old barn-chapel.

When to these odd demonstrations of the vagaries of human nature we add those of the believers in Johanna Southcot, of the madman Thom, and of the professors of the Unknown Tongue, we do not wonder that there are those who would have all men compelled to believe according to law. But what are these follies to the immense amount of good which religious liberty and religious discussion have poured over society? We record these things as the mere whims and gambols of a free fancy in a free country, which soon work themselves out, and are, for the most part, harmless—the bubbles on the stream of life; the clouds in its sky; the meteors that fall as from among the stars to the earth. But the bubbles on the great stream of life and knowledge rise and break, the stream flows on for ever. The clouds sail over us, and are gone; the eternal sky still smiles above us in its purity. The falling stars, as we idly term them, are extinguished ere they reach the earth; the stars themselves burn on unmoved in the serene ocean of infinitude. We can smile at the most wondrous dreams of Swedenborg, the worst absurdity of the Southcottians, the peculiarities of Mullockites and Roeites; for we know that they are optional and evanescent; but the whips and thumbscrews of a religious despotism leave scars that last for ages, and make cripples, not merely of those on whom their force is tried, but of their children, even to the third and fourth generations.



APRIL.

Bow in the aisle, thou little flower,
Bow in the greeny aisle
Of God's all-holy pile,
Thou little trembling flower!
Arrayed in loveliness and shaped in love,
Sweet worshipper on nature's floor,
Cast thy rich incense and thy gaze above;
See, from heaven comes the dewy spring once more.

MARCH yet lingers with us in reality, though he is gone in name. We have the presence of his east winds, which so much prevail through the English springs, and are, indeed, the great drawbacks to their pleasantness.

April and May, the months which the poets have so much delighted to paint as everything delicious and poetical, suffer too frequently the tyranny of the east wind. We are never, in this country, sure of steady, genial weather till well advanced in June. But fickleness and uncertainty have always been the character of our climate; and who shall blame the seasons for standing up for their ancient character? Who shall even blame the climate that has produced such men as Englishmen? The men, whose science, literature, and enterprise have become the great monuments of human progress over three-quarters of the globe.

If our springs be uncertain, no doubt we enjoy the more the fine days and the *occasional* fine seasons when we do get them. There is a feeling about the spring months after all, be they bad as they may, which is peculiar—which can never be annihilated—and which, therefore, amid all shivering winds, sleet, and snow, and flitting sunshine, has something pleasant in it. Thus, in April, the country-people often wonder why we have not April weather, and then they explain it very satisfactorily to themselves—it is still little more than old March. It is still the time of the year which was the March of our ancestors during the old style; and the April of the poets is but just beginning. Others tell us that it is now **BLACKTHORN WINTER**; that is, the time when the blackthorn is about to blossom; which, say they, has always been notorious for cold weather, easterly and north-easterly winds, sleet, hail, and sometimes snow. The blackthorns, and the plums, too, in our orchards, show themselves thickly clustered with buds, which are ready to burst open, the whiteness of the blossom half revealed, like the smile of an arch cottage damsel, who says, spite of dangers abroad, “I have half a mind to sally out.”

Cold as the winds are, the buds of many trees are daily swelling and growing more conspicuous, as if they must come forward, be the weather what it will. The lilac looks really green; it presents itself an object of bushy thickness; it is no longer clustered with mere buds, but flushed with half-unclosed leaves, and the bunches of the future blossoms are conspicuous amongst them. The yellow rose is nearly as forward, but its leaf clusters are more thinly scattered. The bursting blossoms of the pear stand with a lavish promise of beauty and plenty along every bough; the rosebushes have sent forth not merely leaves, but long crimson shoots; the syringa is perfectly clothed with its pale-green leaves, amongst which its buds hang abundantly; the taccamahac is studded with its yellow masses of aromatic and gummy leaves; and as you walk along your plantations and in your fields, you are struck with the large, pale green, gummy buds of the chestnut, which are swelling and bursting forth impatiently, and brightening up the woodside in every passing gleam of the sun. They seem to say, as plainly as possible, "Let us have but one day's warmth, and we shall all rush out like a pack of schoolboys for their noonday play." The hedges are nearly as vigorously impatient, and even patches of thorough green show themselves here and there; you cannot tell why, for there is no more sun and no less east wind there than anywhere else.

Such is often the *opening* of April. It is not winter—it is not summer—it is spring, the fickle and chilly spring of dear Old England; and it is accompanied by its peculiar objects and aspects. Spite of all the coldness and the backwardness—spite of the prognostications that the summer dare not come, and the cuckoo will this year have "to sing on a bare thorn"—besides those buds and unwrapping leaves which we have already noticed, a

greenness *will* steal along the sheltered hedgesides of fields, *will* overrun the southern banks, and flourish in the bowery lanes. The little ficary, or small celandine, with its brilliant golden disk, *will* be seen scattered along the banks, and promising that, at the first genial change, thousands and ten thousands in crowding ranks shall come after them. The homely and good-natured little daisy, which is never affronted that we bring other favourites from all quarters of the globe, and make our gardens perfectly on flame with the gorgeous tints of other climates, still nods to us smilingly from our lawns, and thinly sprinkles before us in our walks the bare turf of the wind-swept meadows. The coltsfoot shows its yellow flowers on cold and bare lands, without a leaf. Violets, blue and white, are found sweet as ever in their old-established haunts; the cardamine bows to us here and there from a moist green hollow, or on the margin of a little runnel; the primroses in their loveliness are punctual as daylight itself, in the spots where they have appeared as long as we can remember anything. Anemonies are dancing in the rude breeze; and everywhere the trees in woods and hedges look crimson with very life, and make us feel what an outburst of Nature's delight is preparing even in these black, chill days.

It was a season like this, years ago, when the heart expands to the love of our mother Earth, and we desire our children to love her too, that I wrote the following stanzas:—

TO A DEAR LITTLE GIRL.

Go to the fair fields where thy mother grew—
Go mark that river's aye-rejoicing roll;
And let those bright and blessed scenes imbue
Thy happy soul.

Go to the land deliciously that lies—
Brown heaths, dark woods, green valleys, glades obscure;
Basking beneath the undisturbed skies,
Silent and pure.

Inviolatè yet—the insufferable throng
Of lettered coxcombs has not broke its rest;
Still left to silence, solitude, and song—
A region blest.

Go, dedicate thy heart to Nature's love,
For there she dwells in glory; thou shalt there
Learn how her spells round the young soul are wove:
Her spirit share.

I would not have thee linked unto the gauds
Of city life—moulded to fancies vain;
Pining for follies which the fool applauds,
The wise disdain.

But be thy spirit wed unto the soul
Of Nature's greatness: to the living flow
Of noblest thought, warm feelings—to the whole
She will bestow.

Then let the world her witcheries employ:
Thy love her poor enchantments will not win;
But brightest waters from the fount of joy
Shall well within.

Then shalt thou gather wisdom day by day,
From stars and mountains; wealth from wind and wave;
And the fond heart which framed this guiding lay,
Bless in its grave.

The season of spring, and in no month more than in April, is the season that awakes the tenderest memories, and the most touching regrets. No man has more beautifully expressed this language of Nature than the now departed Ebenezer Elliott. How full of such imagery are the following lines. A youth is on his way to visit his aged parents in his native place:—

And comes he not? Yea, from the wind-swept hill
The cottage fire he sees:
While of the past, remembrance drinks her fill,
Crops childhood's flowers, and bids the unfrozen rill
Sluice through green trees.

In thought he hears the bee hum o'er the moor;
 In thought the sheep-boy's call;
 In thought he meets his mother at the door;
 In thought he hears his father, old and poor,
 Thank God for all!

His sister he beholds, who died when he
 In London, bound, wept o'er
 His last, sad letter; vain her prayer to see
 Poor Edwin yet again; he ne'er will be
 Her playmate more.

No more with her will hear the bittern boom,
 At evening's dewy close!
 No more with her will wander where the broom
 Contends in beauty with the hawthorn bloom
 And budding rose.

Oh! love is strength! Love with divine control,
 Recals us when we roam:
 In living light it bids the dimmed eye roll,
 And gives a dove's wing to the fainting soul,
 And bears it home.

Home! that sweet word hath turned his pale lip red,
 Relumed his fireless eye;
 Again the morning o'er his cheek is spread;
 The early rose, that seemed for ever dead,
 Returns to die.

Home! home! Behold the cottage of the moor,
 That hears the sheepboy's call!
 And Hannah meets him at the open door,
 With faint, fond scream; and Alfred, old and poor,
 "Thanks God for all."

But even the poet of the Sheffield moors cannot express the tender memory and the touching regret of this season like Nature herself. If we say spring is long a-coming, Spring herself, as with a voice from the ground, says, "Where is the snowdrop?" We look, and it is gone, actually gone! The snowdrop has bloomed its little cloudy, windy day, and is gone for another year. The crimson and azure flowers of the hepatica, which looked so cordial and so cheerful, when they and the snowdrop had the whole garden to themselves,

are gone too. The Christmas rose, that flower of the Alpine valleys, has scattered its petals on the wind long ago; nay, the very crocus, with its bright orange and purple tufts, so gay but the other day, is missing. Who says, then, that spring is not come? See! the daffodil, with its long azure leaves, and its jolly orange countenance, is blooming in masses, or in long, showy lines—the favourite old flower which has blossomed in our crofts and home pastures, hanging over old mossy wells, whence the village rhyme—

The daffy-down-dilly did grow by a well,
But who were its parents no one could tell.

The daffy-down-dilly, which has been plucked and strewed about by village children for generations and generations past—that good old English flower, which belongs to cottage gardens, and is the time-honoured companion of rue, and wallflower, and rosemary—which has sprung up at the foot of box-edges and in neglected arbours and alleys, giving a pensive smile even to desolation itself, and refusing to quit the ground even when the hands that planted it are crumbled into churchyard dust, and the dwellings round which it and its fellows grew have fallen to decay with time, and have been clean swept away—when all other memories have perished—when the families which owned those homesteads have quitted their native land altogether, and planted themselves on the banks of the Ohio or the St. Lawrence,—the good old daffodil springs up still in the same place, and tenderly reminds us that human beings, their cows, their pigs, and poultry, have some time dwelt there.

Flourish then, thou brave old daffodil! flourish joyously for thy day, with all thy old friends round thee! the friends that thou hast loved for years—the polyan-

thus, the single pale primroses, from the woods; the primroses double, white and purple, that now give such beauty to our borders; the garden anemone of various rich colours; the double white anemone, originally from our fields, a very favourite flower, but now rarely found; the tufts of white and yellow alyssum; the spicy wallflower, a genuine old English plant; the lively periwinkle; the dogtooth violet, and violets white and blue, single and double, now beginning to be hidden in their leaves.

There is no season which Shakspeare seems to have delighted in so much as in this of early spring. He refers on many occasions to April with a feeling of intense delight. He was born in April, and he died in April, on the very same day of the month, the 23rd, and the very mildness and changeableness of the month appeared to delight him; April daffodils, and violets, constantly recurring in his pages.

Towards the middle of the month, especially if the wind changes, and April showers fall, what a change! What a greenness in the grass! How the buds and leaves will have advanced! On such days, set forth all you that love nature and yourselves. Breakfast early, and immediately afterwards set forth. Away through old villages, old parks, over commons and uplands. The larks are singing in the air; the blackbirds and thrushes in the lofty trees. Everywhere on the commons are flocks of goslings, in colour exactly resembling the catkins of the willow. The gorse is in full bloom; along the hedgesides, and in the dells and woods, the primroses lie like sunshine, and breathe forth their faint but delicious perfume. The wood-anemones are in thousands. The turf here and there is actually sown with violets. Cowslips are putting up their buds all over the meadows, some already in

flower; and the oxlip, half primrose, half cowslip, is also in bloom. On the purple stems of the woodspurge hang its pale-green flowers, and in old orchards the ground is actually bestrewed with white violets. The laugh-like cry of the woodpecker, and the harsh note of the jay, awaken the forest; and the dusky wings of rooks glance in the sun as they are driven from the new-sown fields by the clapper of the bird-boy. Bees will be seen again diving into the bells of flowers, and making a sunshiny hum of renewed happiness. Everywhere, be sure, you will see men, women, and children, in the fields enlivening the landscape while pursuing their labours. Some are ploughing, some harrowing, some picking stones from the grass, others rolling or bush-harrowing; some are cleaning the drilled wheat, and others breaking the caked crust on the surface with light harrows. The shepherds are shifting their hurdles to give their flocks a fresh piece of the green rye; and the cottagers are busy in their gardens, where are blooming, fumitory, Jerusalem cowslips, blue cynoglossum, yellow and orange crown-imperials, large pink saxifrage, hyacinths, corcorus, narcissus of several kinds, the small native blue anemones, jonquils, the almond and pyrus japonica. Peacock and tortoiseshell butterflies may be seen in numbers amongst the flowers, settling on the warm ground, or two of them hovering one above the other in the air.

Such is April, and, with variable winds and rains, it now marches on gloriously to the end. Nightingales abound; flowers and birds'-nests abound; the calthas or kingcups are perfectly blazing plots of living gold near rivers and in marshes, where the frogs begin their choruses like the hoarse-turning of a million wheels. Botanists and entomologists, with tin cases and flying nets, are abroad. Happy men!

Where there's neither suit nor plea,
But only the wild creatures, and many a spreading tree.

From the dense manufacturing town, the pale mechanic issues forth on a Sunday, for a long and glorious day of natural-history enjoyment. How many such men do the close alleys of Manchester and Sheffield contain? How many poets do such human wildernesses also conceal? I have now lying before me more than a score of poems sent from the hearts of poor men by the influence of spring, seeking for a medium of expression. I select one, to close this article, from those poems. It is by a Sheffield grinder:

Heralded by sunbeams golden,
Garlanded with green buds fair,
Modest snowdrops just unfolden,
Toying 'mid her streaming hair,
Comes fair Spring, a blushing maiden,
With rich hope and beauty laden.

Over brake and meadow winging,
Breathes she life, and light, and power,
Waking song-birds to their singing,
Calling up the dewy flower!
Winter's sterner looks subduing,
Earth with greener tints imbuing.

In the dell, the dewy bather,
Blooms the golden celandine;
Violets into clusters gather,
Daisies dip their fringe in wine.
Below are humming bright-hued things,
Above, the lonely wild bird sings.

Zephyrs greet us, skies grow brighter,
Flashing 'neath the noontide ray;
Fair eyes sparkle, heads grow lighter,
Limbs with gladder impulse play.
Spring brings with her leaf and flower,
Hearts fresh gladness, minds new power.

Sporting through green lane and meadow,
Laughing half his time away,
Childhood chasing bee and shadow,
Toyeth out the pleasant day.
Limbs all wearied, laughing, sighing,
Slowly creeps he, homeward hieing.

Beauty's pilgrim! Nature-loving—
Spring has wooed thy spirit forth;
Ever seeking, ever roving,
Where the beautiful has birth.
Poet-preacher, noble-hearted,
Thou hast on thy mission started.

Look thou from the mountain summit
On the human world below;
Fathoming with mental plummet
Depth of soul from height of brow.
Shouting, Joy! Spring hath unfurled
Her banner o'er the moral world.

EASTER.

With the exception of Christmas, Easter was, and is, the greatest festivity of the Catholic Church. The occasion is the most joyous that can be conceived—the rising of Christ from the tomb, the promise and evidence of immortal life to every child of Adam. There is nothing calculated to inspire so much joy, so much rapturous confidence, so much grateful love to God and our Saviour. Immortal life proclaimed; the palpable proof of it given in the return of Jesus from death and the tomb; beyond these glad tidings, this glorious miracle, setting the truth of Heaven to the truth of these tidings, what more could the heart of man desire? What more could be added to the measure of his joy?

The season is as auspicious as the occasion is great! Spring is bursting forth in all its silent vigour and delicious tenderness. Buds are making green the branch; blossoms of dazzling whiteness, shed over the old fruit-trees in our gardens and orchards, seem to be the magic laughter of Nature at the departed snows of winter—a mimicry of the sad past in the outpouring beauty of the present. Birds sing—ay, in the dusk of early morning; the thrush comes and makes his eloquent oration near your chamber window; an ecstasy, a rhapsody—the en-

thusiastic delivery of a soul of gladness, that must forth to the air and to your ear—and thus the song thrills through your dreams as a voice in fairyland, or in heaven, waking wonderful emotions. Birds sing, rooks caw; flowers—the spicy wallflower, the dear old polyanthus, the luscious jonquil, and violets yet lingering on shady banks, and primroses carpeting the copses with delicate fragrance; on earth and in heaven all seems one heart and one atmosphere of gladness, and the dullest bosom bursts, like the very ground and the very trees, into a thousand buds of new life, and feels that its breathing is itself a thanksgiving.

Is not Christ arisen? Is not God our Father? Is not heaven promised us? Is not earth a heaven to those that live and love? Such are the circumstances that have made Easter, from the most ancient times, a festival of fullest rejoicing. Long before the last great charm was conferred on this festival—before Christ had walked on the earth with the humble, died with the sinner, tenanted the tomb with the myriad dead of all ages, and risen as the first-born of a new and more glorious creation—this mystery of life and resurrection had hovered about in the spirit of prophecy, and had furnished the primitive nations with a significant symbol and rite.

The egg, which now figures so conspicuously in the festivities of Easter in many nations, and which is not yet even wholly disused in this, was the symbol of this mystery of the reassumption of life amongst the most ancient of all people—the Hebrews, the Hindoos, and the Egyptians. The Hebrews regarded it as a type of the whole human world, in Noah and his family being shut up in the Ark, as in an egg; they regarded it, moreover, as a type of their having passed through the Red Sea, and ascended, as it were, to a new life out of it.

They therefore laid it, and probably do still, on the table at the feast of the Passover. The Hindoos celebrated the same great event of the Deluge and the Ark under the fable of the god Vishnu once, in a cycle, enclosing all the world with him in an egg, and floating on the ocean of eternity, till the time came to reproduce himself and all things with him. The Egyptian symbol of the world is a winged egg. Hence the egg, through all ages, has held, in almost every nation, the same high symbolic character, and, introduced into the Christian Church, displays itself at Easter—the time of the resurrection of Christ. In the Greek Church it is as zealously employed as in the Roman—nay, even in Turkey, Easter is a great festival. The Russians celebrate it with extraordinary enthusiasm. At Moscow every one salutes his family, his friends, his neighbours, all that he meets, with—“CHRISTOS VOS CRESS!”—Christ is risen; and is eagerly answered with—“VOISTINEY VOS CRESS!”—He is risen, indeed! On Easter Monday they present one another with Paschal eggs. Lovers to their mistresses, relations to each other, servants to their masters—all bring ornamental eggs. The meanest pauper in the street presenting an egg, and repeating the words “CHRISTOS VOS CRESS,” may demand a salute, even of the empress.

In Germany, for some days before Easter, the market appears full of hard-boiled eggs, deeply dyed with bright colours. These are laid with little sugar hares in the gardens on Easter-Eve, towards dusk, amongst the grass and bushes; and the children are told that on this night the hares lay eggs, and they are up early in the morning to look for them. It is one of their most favourite fictions. Father, mother, and all the elder brothers, and sisters, make as much pretence about these hares' eggs, and sugar hares, as about their Christmas Christ-child and his gifts;

and go out and rejoice in the surprise of the children, as they discover these many-coloured eggs, as much as the children themselves. In many places the poor children go round and beg these eggs, lay them upon green leaves in a basket of field flowers, and at evening roast and eat them.

In France the custom is much the same. The market is filled in the week preceding Easter with the boiled eggs, dyed dark red, or violet colour, and the children amuse themselves with them, and then eat them. Throughout the country of Bonneval on the day preceding Easter Sunday, and during the first days of that week, the clerks of the different parishes, beadles, and certain artisans, go about from house to house to ask for their eggs. The children in different parts of the continent make feats of these red eggs. The Egyptians used to dye them red, because they said the world was on fire at this time. The Christians continued the colour in memory of the blood of the Saviour shed for them on the cross.

In England, in the more rural districts, these eggs, now corrupted from Paschal, pasch, to pace-eggs, are still to be seen at Easter; and in Lancashire you may hear under your windows the clatter of the wooden shoes of the children early on Easter Monday morning, who are running to and fro to beg their pace-eggs.

Such is one of a dozen or more singular observations at Easter, all ancient, but this the most ancient of all. Few, indeed, who see or handle a parti-coloured pace-egg, reflect that it dates its history from the Flood!

In Catholic countries this festival is still celebrated with great pomp and circumstance. Independently of feelings of devotion, every impulse of life is put in motion. Lent, with all its ascetism, and abstinence, and gloom, is over; it is gone for a whole year. The season and the circumstances call on

the people to rejoice, and they do not need calling on twice. There are visitings, balls, dinners, suppers, masquerades; the people fill the streets and taverns with their songs. At Jerusalem, the church of the Holy Sepulchre is crowded, often with as many as 7000 pilgrims, who wait for the giving out of the sacred fire on Easter Sunday morning. At Rome, as I have elsewhere observed, the morning is ushered in with the firing of cannon and the ringing of all the bells in the city. The Pope is carried aloft through the church of St. Peter, attended by his guards in princely uniforms. He is shaded by waving peacocks' feathers;—the ambassadors and their wives; the senators and their trains; the Armenian bishops and priests in very splendid robes; the cardinals, bishops, and all the Roman troops in grand procession. The Pope blesses the people from the terrace, who receive the benediction on their knees, and look up with eager eyes for the indulgences which are scattered amongst them by the cardinals. In the evening there is a grand illumination of St. Peter's.

Besides these, the Catholic churches at Easter were formerly everywhere the scenes of displays that to us would appear most extraordinary. The whole drama of the sepulchre and resurrection was acted. These church plays, as they were called, cost great sums, and would be now thought great scandals. In the churches of the continent you still see the chapels of the sepulchre where these exhibitions were, and probably still are, in some places, made. In England, the clergy, after service, threw up a ball in the church, and there was a regular game. The very archbishops and bishops, if present, threw the ball, and engaged in the sport with their clergy. This, no doubt, originated in the egg, which used to be tossed about and played with as a ball. In Germany, the ceremonies

in the Catholic churches on Easter Sunday are often very beautiful. Processions of children, all in white and crowned with flowers, march round the church after the priests, visiting the different shrines and joining in the singing. In the *very* Catholic districts, they march out and visit in this manner the shrines in the streets and by the waysides. In Vienna, the Prater, or Grand Park, is passed through by a procession often not less than six miles in length. The emperor and royal family lead the way. They are followed by the nobility, and every carriage in the city succeeds, and tens of thousands walk on foot. There is no scene like it in Europe. The common people finish the day in what they call the Sausage Prater, a part of this park where they have swings, whirligigs, puppet-shows, theatres, and all sorts of refreshments. The fine elms wave coolly over their heads, and numbers of fine tame stags walk amongst them and receive dainties.

In Protestant England, parliament winds up, for a week or ten days, its long-winded speeches; the lawyers do, or did, close their courts, put off their law-*suits*, and, in holiday garb, take those unlucky toads, their clients, from under the harrow. Schools still dismiss their pupils who live near to the joys of home; and the working-people indulge themselves with *one day's* relaxation at least. In large towns Easter Monday is a great holiday, and in some of them you may see swings, shows, and whirligigs for the children; but as you go farther into the country, the traces of this once great festival fade away. Perhaps nowhere is it still kept up so much as in London. The people there pour out by thousands and tens of thousands into the country. Greenwich is the grand resort; and on Easter Monday there descend the Thames to that place often upwards of 100,000 persons. The steamers are crowded to excess, often to danger of sinking. Out

of all the alleys and close courts of the huge metropolis men, women, and children, pour to catch a breath of fresh air, for once, on the heights of Greenwich Park; to partake in all the fun of a country fair, and to see the youngsters take their roll down the hill. There is much going on there that must die out as the taste and moral feeling of the masses progress. Vulgarities and low debauch will, with this advance, disappear. The wisdom will be to drop the folly and retain the fun.

In the mean time, such are the attractions of Greenwich, and the facilities of the steamers, that that attraction of former days—the Epping Hunt—has sunk to the most perfect burlesque. I went to witness it a year or two ago. But where were the lord mayor and the aldermen who used to go there in all their glory? Where were the surrounding thousands? On the top of the hill, near the Bald-faced Stag, stood a few carriages with ladies in them; a few gentlemen on horseback; a few vendors of oranges and gingerbeer, and a few professors of the game cockshy, or will-pegs, ready to afford young men the opportunity of winning a snuff-box by the flinging of a stick. There might be a couple of hundreds of people assembled. On came the huntsmen with their stag in a covered cart; the chief huntsman blew dismally on a tin horn; the cart stopped, the door was opened, but out did not come the stag. It appeared a tame one hired for the occasion; and quite contented to remain where it was. SIX hounds followed the cart—the whole splendid pack! They waited with the same *nonchalance* till the huntsman roused the stag, and compelled it to spring out of the cart. Once out, however, it did not seem at all alarmed by the sight of men and dogs. The dogs were equally quiescent. Neither dogs nor stag seemed desirous of the trouble of a run; but as a hunt there *must* be, the stag was

actually *driven* off by the huntsmen, and hooted off by the crowd. Away it went; certainly in a very obliging manner, for it evidently preferred the company of the people and the vicinity of the gingerbread stalls; and away went, after some spirited setting on, *four* of the hounds. One coolly declined the invitation, and laid himself down under the cart; the other as coolly set off on his way homewards again, which, as we returned soon afterwards, we found him pursuing in as calm, sedate, and philosophical a tone of mind as any of the dogmatic school could well evince.

The stag had a large label attached to its neck—I suppose to warn any one against killing it; and the galloping of the horsemen giving spirit to the dogs, away went the stag gaily before them, flapping its great white label, just as several old ladies on the hill were flapping the crumbs and creases out of their white pocket-handkerchiefs, in which they had brought their luncheons. The next moment it plunged into the wood below, and was lost. Disconsolate horsemen followed to the outskirts of the wood; boys rushed in amongst the trees with shouts and howls, but in vain; the stag was as clean gone—perhaps to sleep in some snug thicket—as if it had been an enchanted one, and vanished into thin air. But certainly never *less* enchanted seemed stag, or dogs, or people. The cunning creature never reappeared, and, therefore, I speedily disappeared; as, indeed, the Cockney Hunt will in a few more seasons.

In fact, the people now fly at higher game than the hunting of a creature looking, with its label, more like a bottle of hartshorn than a hart of Greece. They have steamers and railroads; and such places as the gardens and galleries of Hampton Court, the cartoons of Raphael, the paintings of Titian and Correggio, and the sweet slopes

and wooded hills of Greenwich and Richmond Parks, have charms for them that draw them from the more boisterous amusements of their ancestors, or the stupifying heavy-wet of the beer-shop. On such days, such places as Saint Paul's and Westminster Abbey should stand wide open; the Colosseum and the Polytechnic be accessible at the smallest possible price. Zoological gardens, and all kinds of rational and elevating pleasures, should be thrown open to the growing taste in the million. And yet, amongst the numerous customs and games of past times, what should banish the brisk footrace, and the game of football on the village-green? What should banish the gammon of bacon and the tansy-pudding from the family board? In the holidays of the future, taste will banish vulgarity, but not hilarity; youth and age, mind and body, will all find themselves included in the circle of the general joy.

For a moment, however, turn we our eyes from the future, and pay a parting visit to one of the characteristic personages of the past—the old squire, whom we may often encounter in our country rambles.

THE OLD SQUIRE.

The old squire, or, in other words, the squire of the old school, is the eldest born of John Bull; he is the "very moral of him;" as like him as pea to pea. He has a tolerable share of his good qualities; and as for his prejudices—oh, they are his meat and drink, and the very clothes he wears. He is made up of prejudices—he is covered all over with them. They are the staple of his dreams; they garnish his dishes, they spice his cup, they enter into his very prayers, and they make his will altogether. His oaks and elms in his park, and in his woods—they are sturdy timbers, in troth, and gnarled

and knotted to some purpose, for they have stood for centuries; but what are they to the towering upshoots of his prejudices? Oh, they are mere wands! If he has not stood for centuries, his prejudices have; for they have come down from generation to generation with the family and the estate. They have ridden, to use another figure, like the Old Man of the Sea, on the shoulders of his ancestors, and have skipped from those of one ancestor to those of the next; and there they sit on his own most venerable, well-fed, comfortable, ancient, and grey-eyed prejudices, as familiar to their seat as the collar of his coat. He would take cold without them; to part with them would be the death of him. So!—don't go too near—don't let us alarm them; for, in truth, they have had insults, and met with impertinences of late years, and have grown fretful and cantankerous in their old age. Nay, horrid Radicals have not hesitated, in this wicked generation, to aim sundry deadly blows at them; and it has been all that the old squire has been able to do to protect them. Then—

You need not rub them backwards, like a cat,
If you would see them spirt and sparkle up.

You have only to give one look at them, and they will appear to all in bristles and fury, like a nest of porcupines.

The old squire, like his father, is a sincere lover and a most hearty hater. What does he love? Oh, he loves the country—'tis the only country on the earth that is worth calling a country; and he loves the constitution. But don't ask him what it is, unless you want to test the hardness of his walking-stick; it is the constitution, the finest thing in the world, and all the better for being, like the Athanasian creed, a mystery. Of what use is it that the mob should understand it? It is our glorious constitution—that is enough. Are you not contented to

feel how good it is, without going to peer into its very entrails, and perhaps ruin it, like an ignorant fellow putting his hand into the works of a clock? Are you not contented to let the sun shine on you? Do you want to go up and see what it is made of? Well, then, it is the constitution—the finest thing in the world; and, good as the country is, it would be good for nothing without it, no more than a hare would without stuffing, or a lantern without a candle, or the church without the steeple and the ring of bells. Well, he loves the constitution, as he ought to do; for has it not done well for him and his forefathers? And has it not kept the mob in their places, spite of the French Revolution? And taken care of the National Debt? And has it not taught us all to “fear God and honour the King;” and given the family estate to him, the church to his brother Ned, and put Fred and George into the army and navy? Could there possibly be a better constitution, if the Whigs could but let it alone with their Reform Bills? And, therefore, as he most reasonably loves the dear, old, mysterious, and benevolent constitution to distraction, and places it in the region of his veneration somewhere in the seventh heaven itself, so he hates everybody and thing that hates it.

He hates Frenchmen because he loves his country, and thinks we are dreadfully degenerated that we do not now-a-days find some cause, as the wisdom of our ancestors did, to pick a quarrel with them, and give them a good drubbing. Is not all our glory made up of beating the French and the Dutch? And what is to become of history, and the army and the fleet, if we go on this way? He does not stop to consider that the army, at least, thrives as well with peace as war; that it continues to increase; that it eats, drinks, and sleeps as well, and

dresses better, and lives a great deal more easily and comfortably in peace than in war. But then, what is to become of history, and the drubbing of the French? who may, however, possibly die of "envy and admiration of our glorious constitution."

The old squire loves the laws of England; that is, all the laws that ever were passed by kings, lords, and commons, especially if they have been passed some twenty years, and he has had to administer them. The Poor-law and the Game-law, the Impressment Act, the law of Primogeniture, the law of Capital Punishments; all kind of private acts for the inclosure of commons; turnpike acts, stamp acts, and acts of all sorts;—he loves and venerates them all, for they are part and parcel of the statute law of England. As a matter of course, he hates most religiously all offenders against such acts. The poor are a very good sort of people; nay, he has a thorough and hereditary liking for the poor, and they have sundry doles and messes of soup from the hall, as they had in his father's time, so long as they go to church, and don't happen to be asleep there when he is awake himself; and don't come upon the parish, or send bastards there; so long as they take off their hats with all due reverence, and open gates when they see him coming. But if they presume to go to the Methodists' meeting, or to a Radical club, or complain of the price of bread, which is a grievous sin against the agricultural interest; or to poach, which is all crimes in one—if they fall into any of these sins, oh, then, they are poor devils indeed! Then does the worthy old squire hate all the brood of them most righteously; for what are they but Atheists, Jacobins, Revolutionists, Chartists, rogues and vagabonds? With what a frown he scowls on them as he meets them in one of the narrow old lanes, returning from some camp

meeting or other; how he expects every dark night to hear of ricks being burnt, or pheasants shot. How does he tremble for the safety of the country while they are at large; and with what satisfaction does he grant a warrant to bring them before him; and, as a matter of course, how joyfully, spite of all pleas and protestations of innocence, does he commit them to the treadmill, or the county gaol, for trial at the quarter sessions.

He has a particular affection for the quarter sessions, for there he, and his brethren all put together, make, he thinks, a tolerable representation of majesty; and thence he has the satisfaction of seeing all the poachers transported beyond the seas. The county gaol and the house of correction are particular pets of his. He admires even their architecture, and prides himself especially on the size and massiveness of the prison. He used to extend his fondness even to the stocks; but the treadmill, almost the only modern thing which has wrought such a miracle, has superseded it in his affections, and the ancient stocks now stand deserted, and half lost in a bed of nettles; but he still looks with gracious eye on the parish pound, and returns the pinder's touch of his hat with a marked attention, looking upon him as one of the most venerable appendages of antique institutions.

Of course the old squire loves the church. Why, it is ancient, and that is enough of itself; but, besides that, all the wisdom of his ancestors belonged to it. His great, great uncle was a bishop: his wife's grandfather was a dean; he has the presentation of the living, which is now in the hands of his brother Ned; and he has himself all the great tithes which, in the days of popery, belonged to it. He loves it all the better, because he thinks that the upstart Dissenters want to pull it down; and he hates all upstarts. And what! Is it not the church of the Queen,

and the ministers, and all the nobility, and of all the old families? It is the only religion for a gentleman, and, therefore, it is his religion. Would the dissenting minister hob-nob with him as comfortably over the after-dinner bottle as Ned does, and play a rubber as comfortably with him, and let him swear a comfortable oath now and then? 'Tis not to be supposed. Besides, of what family is this dissenting minister? Where does he spring from? At what university did he graduate? 'Twon't do for the old squire. No! the clerk, the sexton, and the very churchwardens of the time being, partake, in his eye, of the time-tried sanctity of the good old church, and are bound up in the bundle of his affections.

These are a few of the old squire's likings and antipathies, which are just as much part of himself, as the entail is of his inheritance. But we shall see yet more of them when we come to see more of him and his abode. The old squire is turned of threescore, and everything is old about him. He lives in an old house in the midst of an old park, which has a very old wall, and gates so old, that though they are made of oak as hard as iron, they begin to stoop in the shoulders, like the old gentleman himself; and the carpenter, who is an old man too, and has been watching them forty years in hopes of their tumbling, and gives them a good lusty bang after him every time he passes through, swears they must have been made in the days of King Canute. The squire has an old coach drawn by two and occasionally by four old fat horses, and driven by a jolly old coachman, in which his old lady and his old maiden sister ride; for he seldom gets into it himself, thinking it a thing fit only for women and children, preferring infinitely the back of Jack, his old roadster.

If you went to dine with him, you would find him just

as you would have found his father; not a thing has been changed since his days. There is the great entrance hall, with its cold stone floor, and its fine tall-backed chairs, and an old walnut cabinet; and on the walls a quantity of stags' horns, with caps and riding-whips hung on them; and the pictures of his ancestors, in their antiquated dresses, and slender, tarnished, antiquated frames. In his drawing-room you will find none of your new grand pianos and fashionable couches and ottomans; but an old spinet and a fiddle, another set of those long-legged, tall-backed chairs, two or three little settees, a good massy table, and a fine large carved mantelpiece, with bright steel dogs instead of a modern stove, and logs of oak burning, if it be cold. At table, all his plate is of the most ancient make, and he drinks toasts and healths in tankards of ale that is strong enough to make a horse reel, but which he continually avows is as mild as mother's milk, and wouldn't hurt an infant. He has an old rosy butler, and loves very old venison, which fills the whole house with its perfume while roasting; and an old double-Gloucester cheese, full of jumpers and mites; and after it a bottle of old port, at which he is often joined by the parson, and always by a queer quiet sort of a tall, thin man, in a seedy black coat, and with a crimson face, bearing testimony to the efficacy of the squire's port and "mother's milk."

This man is always to be seen about, and has been these twenty years. He goes with the squire a-coursing and shooting, and into the woods with him. He carries his shot-belt and powder-flask, and gives him out his chargings and his copper-caps. He is as often seen about the steward's house; and he comes in and out of the squire's just as he pleases, always seating himself in a particular chair near the fire, and pinches the ears of the dogs, and gives the cat, now and then, a pinch of snuff as she lies sleeping

in a chair ; and when the squire's old lady says, " How *can* you do so, Mr. Wagstaff ?" he only gives a quiet, chuckling laugh, and says, " Oh, they like it, madam ; they like it, you may depend." That is the longest speech he ever makes, for he seldom does more than say " yes" and " no" to what is said to him, and still oftener gives only a quiet smile and a sort of little nasal " hum." The squire has a vast affection for him, and always walks up to the little chamber which is allotted to him, once a week, to see that the maid does not neglect it ; though at table he cuts many a sharp joke upon Wagstaff, to which Wagstaff only returns a smile and a shake of the head, which is more full of meaning to the squire than a long speech. Such is the old squire's constant companion.

But we have not yet done with the squire's antiquities. He has an old woodman, an old shepherd, an old justice's clerk, and almost all his farmers are old. He seems to have an antipathy to almost everything that is not old. Young men are his aversion ; they are such coxcombs, he says, now-a-days. The only exception is a young woman. He always was a great admirer of the fair sex ; though we are not going to rake up the floating stories of the neighbourhood about the gallantries of his youth ; but his lady, who is justly considered to have been as fine a woman as ever stepped in shoe-leather, is a striking proof of his judgment in women. Never, however, does his face relax into such pleasantness of smiles and humorous twinkles of the eye, as when he is in company with young ladies. He is full of sly compliments and knowing hints about their lovers, and is universally reckoned amongst them " a dear old gentleman."

When he meets a blooming country damsel crossing the park, or as he rides along a lane, he is sure to stop and have a word with her. " Aha, Mary ! I know you there !

I can tell you by your mother's eyes and lips that you've stole away from her. Ay, you're a pretty slut enough, but I remember your mother. Gad! I don't know whether you are entitled to carry her slippers after her! But never mind, you're handsome enough; and I reckon you're going to be married directly. Well, well, I won't make you blush; so, good-bye, Mary, good-bye! Father and mother are both hearty—eh?"

The routine of the old squire's life may be summed up in a sentence:—hearing cases and granting warrants and licenses, and making out commitments as justice; going through the woods to look after the growth, and trimming and felling of his trees; going out with his keeper to reconnoitre the state of his covers and preserves; attending quarter sessions; dining occasionally with the judge on circuit; attending the county ball and the races; hunting and shooting, dining and singing a catch or glee with Wagstaff and the parson over his port. He has a large, dingy room, surrounded with dingy folios, and other books in vellum bindings, which he calls his library. Here he sits as justice; and here he receives his farmers on rent-days, and a wonderful effect it has on their imaginations; for who can think otherwise than that the squire must be a prodigious scholar, seeing all that array of big books? And, in fact, the old squire is a great reader in his own line. He reads the *Times* daily; and he reads Gwillim's "Heraldry," the "History of the Landed Gentry," Rapin's "History of England," and all the works of Fielding, Richardson, and Sterne, whom he declares to be the greatest writers England ever produced, or ever will produce.

But the old squire is not without his troubles. In his serious judgment all the world is degenerating. The nation is running headlong to ruin. "Lord, how different

it was in my time!" is his constant exclamation. The world is now completely turned topsy-turvy. Here is the Reform Bill, the New Poor-law, which, though it does make sharp work amongst the rogues and vagabonds, yet has sorely shorn the authority of magistrates. Here are the New Game-laws, Repeal of the Corn-laws, and the Navigation-laws; new books, all trash and nonsense; and these harum-scarum railroads, cutting up the country and making it dangerous to be riding out anywhere. "Just," says he, "as a sober gentleman is riding quietly by the side of his wood, bang! goes that 'hell-in-harness,' a steam-engine, past. Up goes the horse, down goes the rider to a souse in the ditch, and a broken collar-bone."

Then all the world is now running all over the continent, learning all sorts of Frenchified airs and fashions and notions, and beggaring themselves into the bargain. He never set foot on the d—d, beggarly, frog-eating continent—not he! It was thought enough to live at home, and eat good roast beef, and sing "God save the King," in his time; but now a man is looked upon as a mere clown who has not run so far round the world that he can seldom ever find his way back again to his estate, but stops short in London, where all the extravagance and nonsense in creation are concentrated, to help our mad gentry out of their wits and their money together. The old squire groans here in earnest; for his daughter, who has married Sir Benjamin Spankitt, and his son Tom, who has married the Lady Barbara Ridemdown, are as mad as the rest of them.

Of Tom, the young squire, we shall take a more complete view anon. But there is another of the old squire's troubles yet to be noticed, and that is in the shape of an upstart. One of the worst features of the times is the growth and spread of upstarts. Old families going down

as well as old customs, and new people, who are nobody, taking their places. Old estates bought up—not by the old gentry, who are scattering their money in London, and amongst all the grinning monsieurs, mynheers, and signores, on the frogified continent, but by the soap-boilers and sugar-bakers of London. The country gentry, he avers, have been fools enough to spend their money in London, and now the people they have spent it amongst are coming and buying up all the estates about them. Ask him, as you ride out with him by the side of some great wood or venerable path, “What old family lives there?” “Old family!” he exclaims, with an air of angry astonishment; “old family! Where do you see old families now-a-days? That is Sir Peter Post, the great horse-racer, who was a stable-boy not twenty years ago; and that great brick house on the hill there is the seat of one of the great Bearings, who have made money enough among the bulls and bears to buy up the estates of half the fools hereabout. But that is nothing; I can assure you, men are living in halls and abbeys in these parts who began their lives in butchers’ shops and cobblers’ stalls.”

It might, however, be tolerated that merchants and lawyers, stock-jobbers, and even sugar-bakers and soap-boilers, should buy up the old houses; but the most grievous nuisance, and perpetual thorn in the old squire’s side, is Abel Grundy, the son of an old wheelwright, who, by dint of his father’s saving and his own sharpness, has grown into a man of substance under the squire’s own nose. Abel began by buying odds and ends of land and scattered cottages, which did not attract the squire’s notice; till, at length, a farm being to be sold, which the squire meant to have, and did not fear any opponent, Abel Grundy bid for it, and bought it, striking the old

steward actually dumb with astonishment; and then it was found that all the scattered lots which Grundy had been buying up, lay on one side or other of this farm, and made a most imposing whole. To make bad worse, Grundy, instead of taking off his hat when he met the old squire, began now to lift up his own head very high; built a grand house on the land plump opposite to the squire's hall-gates; has brought a grand wife—a rich citizen's daughter; set up a smart carriage; and as the old squire is riding out on his old horse Jack, with his groom behind him, on a roan pony with a whitish mane and tail, the said groom having his master's great coat strapped to his back, as he always has on such occasions, drives past with a dash and a cool impudence that are most astonishing.

The only comfort that the old squire has in the case is talking of the fellow's low origin. "Only to think," says he, "that this fellow's father hadn't even wood enough to make a wheelbarrow till my family helped him; and I have seen this scoundrel himself scraping manure in the high roads, before he went to the village school in the morning, with his toes peeping out of his shoes, and his shirt hanging like a rabbit's tail out of his ragged trousers; and now the puppy talks of 'my carriage,' and 'my footman,' and says that 'he and *his lady* purpose to spend the winter in *the* town,' meaning London!"

Wagstaff laughs at the squire's little criticism on Abel Grundy, and shakes his head; but he cannot shake the chagrin out of the old gentleman's heart. Abel Grundy's upstart greatness will be the death of the OLD SQUIRE.

THE PRIMROSE GATHERER.

In the great world of London there is scarcely a region or a period of the year, that has not its peculiar feature,

custom, or characteristic. Nature seems shut out there by miles of streets, and square miles of brick and mortar; but Nature is still there strong as ever, living in the human heart, if she cannot live before human eyes, and causing the toiling thousands to trudge off on Sundays and holidays into the faraway country, as surely as it draws out the aristocratic, when their season is over, and parliament closes, to their distant halls and mountain tracts. The outpourings of London would make a book. Those great effervescences in the mighty vessel of human life, which foam over on every side, and send their myriads forth into woods and fields, would present a series of scenes in the popular existence that would show how omnipotent is Nature.

At the moment in which I write this—though I am writing of spring—one of those great periodical outpourings is taking place. The blackberries, and the mushrooms, and the nuts, are ripe in Epping Forest; and in thousands of work-shops during the week, the question has been asked by apprentice and by journeyman: “Bob, ain’t you for the Forest on Sunday? Bill, do you know that the blackberries are ripe now?” And there have been brisk answers: “Ay, are *you* going? I’ll go, and Joe will go, and Sam at Benson’s, and Ned at Woollett’s. And won’t we have a great lark?”

Through the whole length and breadth of the work-shops of London; through all Bethnal-green, Spitalfields, through the Minories, and along Tower-hill, and up Shoreditch and Clerkenwell, and to the very purlieus of the Seven Dials, and across the water in Southwark, has the important news flown from ear to ear that blackberries are ripe, and mushrooms in the forest turf. Like an electric thrill, it has darted on far and wide; and the great work-shop soul, whether sweating over hot iron, or steaming in dye-houses and hatteries, whether darting the

shuttle amongst silken threads, or moulding bread for the living, or clenching nails in coffins for the dead, amid the hum of the old vampire song—

For when a dead man learns to draw a nail,
He soon will burst an iron bar in two.

Everywhere there is but one thought—blackberries; and one imagination, that of cool breezes, the smell of fresh turf, and “the sound of a-going into the tops of the trees.”

It is a fever, a contagion, a frenzy. Try to cure it, to crush it, to turn it aside—it is vain! At midnight of Saturday, outpour thousands of boys, boy-men, and men-boys. Thousands of them have never taken a moment's rest, but have rushed forth from smutty shop and foetid alley to collect their forces, and are off. The breeze may blow them, or the shower may wash them, if they will, but that is all the cleaning and the washing that they wait for. All night from twelve o'clock I have heard them, and occasionally have risen to have a look at them in the bright gas-lit road. And thus they stream along; the true rising-generation of swelterers and broilers, in cap and jacket, and with basket on arm, or thrown over the shoulder on a stick. There they come, still streaming on by hundreds and by thousands, calling to one another to come on; and some singing in groups. From hour to hour this has continued, till it is now twelve o'clock in the day, and still they come and come, and go and go onwards. Men with short pipes in mouth, and boys of twelve and fourteen; and as day has approached, you see that many have stayed to lie down a few hours, and to put on a clean shirt and Sunday coat; and there are others of smarter appearance, as from behind counters, marching in grave talk, and carrying smart sticks. And there! the spring-carts loaded with whole families, and going as if for their lives, are now coming too!

Good luck to them all! If blackberries grew on every twig of every bush and tree in all Epping Forest, what were they amongst so many! But what of that? There is the forest, and freedom, and fresh air, and the exhilaration of a great day when thousands on thousands are gone out on a Sunday visit to old mother Nature! Anon, you shall see them coming back, filling all the road for miles, and their baskets not overloaded, though some of them are carrying them on a stick between two, like the messengers with the bunch of grapes returning from the Promised Land.

How different is this scene to the one which ought to have come first, but must come here. It is a Sunday morning in spring, and in Bethnal-green. Between the church and the railway on the left hand, as you go towards Whitechapel, there is a number of gardens, and these gardens are now all thrown open; and before their gates are set out plants and flower-roots, newly taken up, for sale. There is almost everything that you remember as the favourites of your childhood, and the inhabitants of old cottage gardens, in districts of the country far away. There are ladsloves, sweet-williams, daisies, pinks, wall-flowers, polyanthus, thrifts, tufts of sweet-peas, and tufts of larkspurs, violets, and columbines, and a thousand other things, all ticketed ONE PENNY EACH. For one penny each can the poor man or woman stock from this convenient market the little plot by the door in the narrow alley, or the tub in the little corner, or the pot in the window, where the poor condemned plants shall fade and sicken under the admiring eyes of those who are fading and sickening themselves, in those neglected regions where poverty and pestilence house together.

And out of these alleys, and courts, and streets unknown, those pale and sickly weavers are streaming, to feast their eyes on this gay scene of gardens and garden-plants, and

to endure and give way to the temptation of ONE PENNY EACH. Yes, there is a brisk trade going on on Sunday morning, and neither clergyman nor police interfere; neither Sir Andrew nor Lady Go-Easy-to-Heaven come and reprove. There are, here and there, thick and knotted crowds; and, when you get a peep through them, they are surrounding some beautiful plant in full bloom! Like bees do they crowd round and brighten their hungry souls with all its glorious hues, and inhale its fragrance. How different to the fever and cholera-creating stench of their whole week and year!

And there are seeds of all sorts for sowing—lupins, and sweet-peas, and larkspur, and nasturtiums, and *everything!* And within the gardens go to and fro, amongst the beds, those that will have something particularly fine and fresh, and the vendors are ready with their spades to dig them up, and commend them, for an extra price.

And there, too, are brought singing-birds in cages—canaries and gorse linnets—for sale, if it be May, and genial; for at earlier and more ungenial times we have missed them, and been told that “it was too chilly for the poor things.”

And there, too, comes THE PRIMROSE GATHERER! There he is, just as you see him in Hunt’s and Oakley’s pictures, with his basket crammed with the plunder of many a lane and woodside. There he has set out single roots of primroses all in blow, and cowslip roots just putting up their fresh and wrinkled leaves; and orchis plants, all clear and spotted, and speaking of Maydays to come, when they will show their purple faces in the grass of a thousand pleasant pastures.

Oh, boy! almost cruel in thy tender mercies! for though thou bringest delight in primrose and in blue-bell from the far country, and though thy face is not the face of the sharp, hard, and too-knowing city urchin, but has the

sentiment of the flower and the solitary field in it—something sweet and poetical—yet there are in thy fresh cheek, and thy quiet eye, and thy up-heaped basket, things that are cruelly beautiful. To what moors, and woods, and river banks, do thy primroses, and thy oxlips, and thy springing ferns, carry the imagination! Thine is a life that might enchant a Bloomfield, a Crabbe, or a Thomas Miller. Thou hast no end of solitary rambles over waste and wold, by brook and river. The keeper knows thee, and lets thee pass unchallenged; the wood-peeping squire bids thee only keep the path, and does not threaten with the lock-up. The flock know thee on the downs where the bee-orchis springs, and the lark, as it soars high above thy head, during thy noon sleep on the soft sward. I trace thy travels and thy haunts as I often stray through Covent Garden, and feast my eyes on lilies of the valley, and nodding fritillaries, and crowds of golden cowslips, and kingcups from the verdant marshes. What a life is thine—a poet's and a pilgrim's. The seaside sees thee await its breeze; the hanging wood, with its tall and solemn trees, is about thee, with all its stillness; the solitary mere, gay with snowy water-lilies, and thickly screened with tall reeds, sees its wild-fowl startled by thy presence; the ancient forest refreshes thee with its peculiar odours, and gives thee a hollow tree for a dining-room. When the sun burns on the wide sandy moorland, and the sundew is heavy with sparkling diamonds, thou and the melancholy curlew are there; and by rushing streams dost thou gather the blue geranium; and amid rocks, the mountain heliotrope, all glowing gold; and in caverns, where trickles the everlasting waterdrop, the delicate maidenhair. All these dost thou send into the heart of London, to remind us that nature is as vast, as varied, and as beautiful as ever; but thou art in the heart of nature itself.

Long life to thee in all thy wanderings, and at all seasons! Still send us blossoming tokens of those seasons. Remind us, by country fragrance and a thousand beautiful things, that there is still nature and a country; though we weary toilers in the great Babel see little more than we see through thee. Welcome shalt thou be in all thy floral characters, but in none more than as **THE PRIMROSE GATHERER**; for in that thou art the herald and companion of delightful spring.

COMING SPRING.

In all the years that have been,
The spring hath greened the bough;
The gladsome, hopeful spring-time!
Keep heart, it cometh now.

The winter-time departeth;
The early flowers expand;
The blackbird and the turtle-dove
Are heard throughout the land.

The sadness of the winter,
Which gloomed our hearts, is gone;
A thousand signs betoken
That spring-time comes anon!

'Tis spring-time in our bosoms;
All strife aside we cast:
The storms were for the winter-days,
But they are gone and past.

Before us lies the spring-time—
Thank God! the time of mirth—
When birds are singing in the trees,
And flowers gem all the earth.

When a thousand busy hands upturn
The bounteous, fruitful mould,
And the heart of every poet feels
More love than it can hold.

In all the years which have been,
The spring-time greened the bough—
The gentle, gracious spring-time!—
Rejoice!—it cometh now!

MARY HOWITT.



MAY.

Give me a dark, a stern, and wintry day,
That by the fire-light, and with wine and wassail,
I may collect around me all my friends,
And be right merry; knowing that the time
Flies fast, and I must die!
Give me a May-day, that amid the fields,
Treading on flowers and in the odorous air,
I may roam on o'er mountains, and through woods;
And as the tender memories of the dead
Stream o'er me from the things they loved so once,
And from the flowers that decked their early biers,
I—feeling saddest love within my soul—
May feel my soul, and know I am immortal.

It is once more May! Once more Nature has opened her house to all her guests. She has hung forth her richest draperies; she has repainted, reburnished, regilded; she has drawn the veil from before her most magnificent pictures, and all earth is her garden, in which

the trees are white with blossom, and the ground is carpeted with myriads of flowers. The soft breezes diffuse the most delicious odours; and the sun, spreading from mountain to mountain, looks down into the narrowest vales, the densest clefts of the hills and thickets of the forests, into rushing rivers, and serene lakes, and bids the lowliest creatures awake from their long slumbers, and come forth to the festival of May. The nightingale is come from the south; "the voice of the turtle is heard in our land;" the swallow comes from the shores and the gardens of China, on whose sea-cliffs she has built her nest of the purest foam, or has hung it beneath the flapping ornament of the tall pagoda's eaves, above the scent of tea-trees, and above the heads of quaint companies, sitting to admire the plum-blossom, and the vernal willows, and to hear the newest strains of the poets on their beauty.

All the guests of Nature are assembled, and in holiday trim. Bird and beast, and man at the head of all, revel in this glorious season of flowers, greenness and freshness. The primroses are ageing, and looking with dim eyes out of their woodland abodes, but the cowslips star the deep and delicate grass on mead and upland with a joyous beauty.

THE COWSLIP.

It is the same! it is the very scent—
That bland, yet luscious, meadow-breathing sweet,
Which I remember when my childish feet,
With a new life's rejoicing spirit, went
Through the deep grass with wild flowers richly blent,
That smiled to high heaven from their vernal seat.
But it brings not to thee such joy complete;
Thou canst not see, as I do, how we spent
In blessedness, in sunshine, and in flowers,
The beautiful noon; and then, how seated round
The odorous pile, upon the shady ground—
A boyish group—we laughed away the hours.
Plucking the yellow blooms for future wine,
While o'er us played a mother's smile divine.

Go out all ye who can into the country and see the great festival of May! See the village greens, where the maypoles once collected about them all the population of the place to rejoice. See the woods to which the young people used to go out before daylight a-maying. See the fields, deep with richest grass and flowers, where children, in this beautiful holiday of Nature, have from age to age run and gathered pinaforesful of perishable beauty and fragrance. Pace the river sides, where poets have walked and mused on songs in honour of May. Sit on stiles where lovers have sate, and dreamt that life was a May month, to be followed by no autumn of care, no winter of death. Gaze on the clear sky, where, spite of death and care, the word—Immortality—is written in the crystal dome of God. Enjoy that beauty which can come only from an eternal source of beauty; listen to that joy singing from the throats of birds and the hum of insect wings—joy that must come from an eternal source of joy—and let the holiday heart strengthen itself in the assurance that all this scene of enjoyment is meant to be enjoyed, and not in vain.

I shall now give a narrative of the progress of a month of May, as it was put down in Surrey as it actually passed.

May 1st.—Glorious weather! The real May of the poets. Warm, bright; and the landscape growing visibly richer every hour. Plum-bloom falling in showers, pear-trees white with blossom; chestnuts and sycamores making green patches in the woods and hedges. The larches gay with their delicate and delicious spring green. Wild cherries in flower; rockets, purple and white, in full bloom in the garden; and the grape-hyacinth, with its beautiful blue. Tulips and anemones of many rich hues abundant. The wall-flowers in the cottage gardens—

and nowhere are they more plentifully grown than here—rich masses of gold, from the deep ruddy to the pale. Delicious is their spicy odour. The primroses still continue their welcome bloom on the commons, which hereabout scattered with oaks and rich with thickets, in which hundreds of nightingales are singing, are like tracts of old fairy forest. The cuckoo is heard on all hands. The grasses grow deep. The pools and streams are quite white with the water-ranunculus. The foxglove leaves are springing firm and green in the woods and on banks. Numbers of insects are flitting about, and visiting the flowers, or humming over the warm ground. The red, black-spotted butterfly is out, alighting and basking in the warm dust of the highway, or the footpath before you, elevating and depressing its wings, as if drinking in at every pore the sunshine, as the spirit of life. The boys have caught already one of the most resplendent species of moth. The ichneumon flies are out, busy and alert, as if they had fire in their veins. The gossamer, to my surprise, is seen here at this season, covering the grass with its films, and its cottony flakes of conglomerated threads flying in the air as in autumn. In the gardens the common currant is beautiful, with its pendent racemes, and the red-flowering currant, which comes out in March, still continues its long-lived flowers.

May 4th.—Glorious weather still! Went to Hampton Court, walking over the meadows from Esher by Moulsey, with my daughter. We were struck with the wonderful progress of vegetation. The wild cherries in the woods were masses of snow; the woods were richly variegated with the trees in the different degrees of leafiness; the hedges luxuriantly green, and throwing out the delicate odour peculiar to the hawthorn in spring. Everything was beautiful; and the beauty of the very ditches, with

their calthas, or kingcups, of richest green, and golden blossoms; their cardamines—pink and white ones, each very lovely flowers—made us say how impossible it is in winter to keep alive the memory of the delightfulness of the country in spring and summer. The earth in its fresh greenness; the cheerful sunshine; the air full of delicate odours, make every field a paradise, and bring back our youthful feelings. The cowslips are sprinkled in millions over the meadows, but not yet in full blow; and the orchis (*orchis morio*) already displayed its sweet purple. So beautiful was everything, that it was enough to make us sing, as the Spanish poet sings, of

THE NIGHTINGALE.

The rose looks out in the valley,
And thither will I go—
To the rosy vale, where the nightingale
Sings his song of woe.

The maiden is on the river-side
Culling the lemons pale;
Thither—yes! thither will I go—
To the rosy vale, where the nightingale
Sings his song of woe.

The fairest fruit her hand hath culled,
'Tis for her lover all;
Thither—yes! thither will I go—
To the rosy vale, where the nightingale
Sings his song of woe.

In her hat of straw, for her gentle swain,
She has placed the lemons pale.
Thither—yes! thither will I go—
To the rosy vale, where the nightingale
Sings his song of woe.

Our rosy vale, however, was the vale of the Thames. There ran the noble river, with its bankful, clear, careering stream; with its willowy islands, and its swans gliding along near the brink, or basking on the islands, where sate an old mother swan on its high-piled nest of rushes. What is finer than the banks of the Thames? The lordly

trees overhanging them, in parks, gentlemen's grounds, and gardens; the rich colour of green meadows seen on all sides. Fishermen were in their punts and skiffs, with gay people rowing to and fro; all speaking of the wealth and enjoyment of a great people, and of the vicinity of the great metropolis of England.

We walked in the Palace Gardens. Saw the *nemophila insignis* in flower; a low, purple iris; the star of Bethlehem (*ornithogalum umbellatum*), with its pure white flowers blooming about the feet of the tall limes in the avenues, where it had been planted with great taste. The abundance of wall-flowers gave great richness to the borders, and breathed forth their spiciness through the whole scene. On several of the flower-beds, long borders, of about a yard wide, of mixed cowslips, red and yellow, and oxlips, yellow and purple, presented a piece of the richest mosaic. It exceeded in beautiful effect anything I could have imagined from those simple English flowers. It is worth while for all who have gardens of any extent to have such borders; it shows, moreover, how fine, tall, and bold these flowers become by cultivation. It is true that they are all *spring* flowers, and when their blow was over would leave a blank place, but they might be planted in rows, leaving a few inches space between each row, so that when they were over, annuals planted between the rows would soon fill up the space with their beauty.

As we returned, the nightingales were singing, both merrily and sadly. What various opinions have our poets given of the spirit of the nightingale's song. I might quote Milton with his "most musical, most melancholy," Coleridge, Keats, and others, in proof of this, but my space forbids. The song of the nightingale is, in fact, full of both joy and sorrow. The words of Milton, and the Grecian fable of the origin of the nightingale,

have impressed the idea of the melancholy of this noble bird's song on the minds of poets. But the general character of its song is joyous, rapturous, full of an ecstasy uncontrollable and overflowing. It is like a mountain-stream, running and leaping on in its beauty and riotous gladness, that is, when the bird is in full power and spirit. But, ever and anon, comes a note of woe and wailing, that pierces the heart unexpectedly, and goes down to its lowest depths with a most pathetic effect. It is just as if the bird were carried on in its song by a sense of resistless present joy, yet in the midst of it, ever and anon, came suddenly the sharp sense of past sorrow, the memory of some tragic event, that can never be long altogether forgotten. While it sings and exults, and seems to feel all the felicity of the vernal season, and to express it as no other voice can express it, it seems to exclaim — "Oh, oh, oh! ah, well-away! but yet I am miserable; but yet that old horror, that woful separation, that inextinguishable grief, *will* come back again!" In another moment it throws itself again into the midst of the present, and makes the evening woodland, or the moonlight copse, ring with its triumphant music.

May 5th.—Saw the lesser butcher-bird; the cockchaffer; the bluebells out in the warm woods; the meadow-saxifrage; and the *narcissus poeticus*, in the cottage crofts. Heard the farmer's maid-servant calling the men from the fields, by knocking on the bottom of a pail with a stone. In some old-fashioned districts they blow a horn for the purpose.

May 8th.—East wind, with a blue haze; called here blight, but which is in reality the smoke from London, visible with this wind forty miles down the country. Thunder, and vivid sheet-lightning, and a night's rain.

May 9th.—Still east wind, cold and blustering; tearing

off the young branches of the fruit-trees, scattering the blossoms like showers of snow; tearing off also the opening bunches of the lilacs. The sycamore full of leaf, and its racemes full of bees. The horse-chestnut rapidly pushing its upright thyrses into bloom.

May 10th.—How glorious is a genuine May-day, especially after rain! It realises all and everything that the poets have said of it. It is bright and rejoicing from the first. How soft—how dewy—how calm and delicious, is the early morning at three and four o'clock; a time when citizens—and many country people too—don't know that there is any morning at all. Thousands and tens of thousands pass all their lives in the country, and never know the indescribable pleasantness of early morning in spring and summer. But the birds know it. It is then that they seem to enjoy their lives to the very height of their capacity. It is then that they have the world all to themselves, with the other creatures of the woods and floods. Man has not yet risen out of his lazy lair to disturb their felicity. The lounging keeper, with that everlasting gun on his arm, is not seen; he was up late last night on the watch for poachers. The wagoner has not yet disturbed the silence of the lanes with his bells, and grinding wheels, and jingling team. The village urchins, the earliest risers of the human race, have yet scarcely peeped out of their cottage doors, and begun to peer into hedges, and the holes of walls, or up into the apple-trees of the orchard, for birds'-nests. The sun has not yet risen; but a beautiful and most cheerful opal light fills the eastern sky, and tells that he is hastening on his way in his strength, and is evermore smiling a glorious farewell to some eastern land. What a clamour of birds' voices!—the whole air rings with them. How pearly lies the dew on the greensward along the lane-

side, on the short turf of the common. How sweet is the fresh odour of the new leaves of the wild rose, that hang round you "at this sweet hour of prime."

Rose! Rose! open thy leaves!
 Spring is whispering love to thee.
 Rose! Rose! open thy leaves!
 Near is the nightingale on the tree.
 Open thy leaves,
 Open thy leaves,
 And fill with balm-breath the sunlit eaves.

Lily! Lily! awake, awake!
 The fairy watcheth her flowery boat;
 Lily! Lily! awake, awake!
 Oh! set thy scent-laden bark afloat.
 Lily, awake!
 Lily, awake!
 And cover with leaves the sleeping lake.

Flowers! Flowers! come forth, 'tis spring!
 Stars of the woods, the hills, and the dells!
 Fair valley-lilies, come forth and ring,
 In your green turrets, your silvery bells!
 Flowers, come forth,
 'Tis spring! 'tis spring!
 And beauty in field and woodland dwells.

May 20th.—The country is now the perfect paradise of May. The foliage all round you presenting nothing but the most delightful and delicate hues of amber-green; the limes in large avenues, as those in Hampton Court Park, stretching out their sweeping branches, and lifting aloft their heads in a tenderness of verdure that seems ready to melt at the touch, and to belong only to some ethereal clime; the chestnuts in full flower; the sycamores sounding with thousands of bees; the grass knee-deep, and full of flowers; the dear old cowslips, lost in the luxuriant herbage springing around them, are retiring from the scene, as if conscious that their day is over, and that myriads of gay successors must take their brief turn

in the sun, and in the admiration of man; the hawthorn is bursting into flower, and all the air is so soft, odorous, and delicious, that it is a luxury to breathe it; and the anglers, now stealing along the grassy margin of streams, seem to require none of their ordinary attribute of patience, but to have enough of the enjoyment of life in a quiet consciousness of sunshine, lapsing waters, grassiness, and blossoms and music on every bough. How delicious is it now on the banks of the Wye, in Wales, or its lovely namesake in Derbyshire; of the Dove, rushing on amid its natural spires and pinnacles, and its grey and shrubby rocks; on the banks of any of them amongst the green hills of the peak, with thousands of larks singing over head.

The migratory birds are all come now, dear old friends, from their far travels. Birds'-nests abound in tree, on bush, and on the green standing corn. Young birds now begin to show themselves, especially robins. The rooks are ready to fly with their young ones to the luxurious summer-life of green fields and leafy trees all the country over. River banks and thickety hollows are deep with a rampant growth of mallows, the mustard tribes, and wilderness masses of the giant's coltsfoot.

May 28th.—In gardens, rhododendrons, laburnums, lilacs, westerias, yellow broom, China-roses, small phlox, trolius, pionies, columbines, and the like flowers, abound. In the fields, the red poppies begin to flame out; the fern-owl and the grasshopper-lark are heard; the abele-tree is just putting out its leaves as white as snow, making a striking contrast amongst the other trees, especially pines. In heaths and forests, the young ruddy shoots of the Scotch firs, the crimson tassels and light foliage of the larches, refresh the eye; and eye and ear find constant pleasure in noting the plants peculiar to the dry turf, and

the birds, too, which are only found there. In woods, the blue-bells now are glorious.

May 30th.—The blossom of the apple-trees is now over, and young green fruit begins to be visible on the various trees; as plums, apricots, peaches, nectarines, and young gooseberries nearly ready for tarts; the quince is in full bloom, with its pale, delicately-flushed flowers, pale, yellow-green leaves—a very lovely variety amongst other trees.

The hawthorn hangs thick and almost overpoweringly sweet with blossom. The days are warm—almost hot, and the evenings begin to have a summer aspect. As you cross the heaths, you see, here and there, solitary people, in the twilight, cutting up furze. You hear the wood-pigeons and turtle-doves cooing deeply and sonorously in the woods; the voice of the cuckoo comes from the distant trees, rich and continuous; the fern-owl keeps up his whirring note, after eight o'clock, exchanging it, now and then, for a sharp *quit, quit*; the thrush and the nightingale sing bravely in the woodlands; and the cuckoo, quitting its leafy hiding-place, flies past with cowering wings, and its peculiar cry, when in motion, most resembling *quoc, quoc, quoc*, of any sound we can make. In the heat of the day, on the heaths, you see the adder, coiled up on the sunny side of a gorse bush, or of a heathy slope, and, as you approach, rearing his head about six inches above the coil of his ruddy-brown body, and threatening you boldly; and little shining brown lizards run here and there amongst the heather, and look at you with their glittering eyes. They are pretty and perfectly harmless creatures, though the country-people call them efts and askers, evidently corruptions of asps, and believe them venomous. Our children, however, particularly admire them, and take them up without the least fear or injury.

By the river-sides, the mayflies are out, settling on the water, and rising again from the surface, at their pleasure. Now, with their wings aloft, pressed together, forming a sail by which they are driven by the breeze; now soaring away for awhile, and then settling again on the flood. But anon, a sudden puff of wind upsets them; their wings adhere to the surface of the flood; they flutter; a watchful enemy below—the trout—sees the motion, springs up, and swallows them. The banks of these rivers, as you sail between them, are beautiful with overhanging grass, and bushes covered with bloom; whole loads of lilacs, quinces, roses, and honeysuckles, when you pass gardens and shrubberies; and hawthorns, blue-bells, and the like, along the fields and woods. The very sedges, with their dark-brown heads, are beautiful; and the rough-leaved cumfrey, with its white or pink tubular flowers, not less so. The water-hen, seated on her nest, on the stump of some tree, or on some little island inaccessible to people on land, dreaming not of approach by boats till she sees you, and cowers closer, is a pleasant sight; and still pleasanter, the swan, on hers—a frequent object on the Thames. The kingfisher, flitting along with his tawny-red breast and green back and quick cry, assures you that his nest, too, is not far off, but deep in the river-bank.

Such is the glorious career of May;—one of God's most lavish revelations of paradisaical beauty and sweetness on earth. All the world of nature is a heavenly world during May; but, like all other charms and delights here below, it posts rapidly away. It is a dream rather than a reality; it is—it was! Nay, hold it fast! Seize it by that spray of blossom!—by that?—it is gone! and ardent, open-faced June stands before us, and laughs at our bewilderment. Who shall say, "I will wait for this fair time till another year?"

May is come, and May is flying;
 Spring is here, and Spring is dying.
 Shout a welcome, frank and flowing;
 Say, Farewell!—for she is going.

'Tis the hour when life is deepest;
 'Tis the time when most thou weepst;
 'Tis the day when flowers in numbers
 Strew the sainted in their slumbers.

Buds are breaking; love is waking;
 Time our very breath is taking.
 We are jocund; we are drooping;
 Summer comes, for Spring is stooping.

Love her! bless her! as she goeth,
 Ere the grass the mower moweth;
 Ere the cowslip hath departed,
 Kiss sweet May all tearful hearted.

For she goes to all the perished,
 Goes to all the dearly cherished;
 Sails the sea, and climbs the mountain,
 Seeking Spring's eternal fountain.

May is come, and May is flying;
 Spring is here, and Spring is dying.
 Shout a welcome, fresh and flowing;
 Say, Farewell!—for she is going.

MAY-DAY.

Of this fine old popular festival scarcely a trace now remains. From one of the most universally adopted ones, by the people of both ancient and modern nations, it is now become the most completely obsolete. In my "Rural Life of England" I have shown what were its customs, which may be traced back to the Romans, to our Danish ancestors, and to the Hindoos, who still hold a festival of a like nature, and erect a pole wreathed with flowers. Our Saxon ancestors, going to their Wittenagemot, left their servants to a saturnalia of this kind, where a king and queen were chosen. They also raised a may-pole, as their standard of justice, in their great out-of-door tribunals held at this season. The Danes blew horns

at this feast; and traces of the custom still remain at Oxford, Cambridge, and other places. But still stronger traces yet remain in Germany, where the boys on May-day make long horns from the bark of the elm, which they strip off, and calling them *Schalmeien*, get upon all the hill-tops, and make a most singular clamour with them. The celebration of this festival by the Druids and Celts points it out as belonging to the worship of the sun. In Ireland and the Highlands of Scotland, the people still kindle fires on the tops of their mountains on this day, called Beal Fires, and the festival there celebrated Beltane, or Bealtane—the last remnant of the worship of Baal.

In Sweden, as we learn from Miss Bremer, the country-people still get on the hill-tops, and make great fires. In Germany this used to be the custom; but the fires on the hills being prohibited, owing to the conflagrations sometimes occasioned by them in the forests, the boys still make bonfires in the by-lanes of towns and in villages, and leap to and fro over them—thus, in fact, passing through the fire to Moloch, without knowing why. In Spain the village-queen is still called Maia, showing the Roman origin of the custom there; and in France they still adorn their houses with boughs; and hence their *épouses*, or brides of the month of May. In fact, as we have elsewhere shown, the vestiges of the rites and festival of May prove how ancient and universal was their observance. The poets were as enamoured of May-day and its jollity and love-making as the people; and in the “Rural Life” will be found ample quotations from Chaucer, Shakspeare, Milton, Henrick, and other poets, full of the spirit and the praises of the time.

So long as Paganism and so long as Popery continued in the ascendant, the mirth of May-day remained undi-

minated. The people lived easily, and, like the bird on the bough, sang and sported care-free through life. They were like so many great children, neither looking behind nor before, but taking God's sunshine and his flowers as they came, and rejoicing in them while they lasted. But in came Puritanism, and down went all the old festivities and pageants. It was not merely that a sterner discipline had been introduced, but that a great revolution had arrived, in which thought and intellect asserted their sober but entrancing power, fertile in deeper joys as well as sorrows, and casting a distaste on the mind for the puerilities of the world's childhood. From this hour the pageants of May-day perished irrevocably; and a maypole now is one of the rarest of sights, to be met with only in the most primitive and obscure villages.

Not but that there have been many attempts to revive the celebration of May-day, from its supposed greater congeniality to the spirit of youth than that of any other festivity. But the error lay in attempting to graft on a thinking age the pastimes of an unthinking one; in not perceiving the real nature of the change which had taken place. This change was less in the outward circumstances than in the inner mind. There was a new nature created, in which the old could no longer exist. The times, and the spirit of the times, were changed:—

Happy the age, and harmless were the days—
For then true love and amity were found—
When every village did a Maypole raise,
And Whitsun ales and May-games did abound;
And all the lusty youngers, in a rout
With merry lasses, danced the rod about.
Then Friendship to their banquets bid the guests,
And poor man fared the better for their feasts.

The lords of manors, castles, towns, and towers
Rejoiced when they beheld the farmers flourish,
And would come down unto the summer bowers
To see the country gallants dance the Morrice.

But since the SUMMER POLES WERE OVERTHROWN,
 And all good sports and merriments decayed,
 How times and May are changed, so well is known,
 It were but labour lost if more were said.

PASQUIN'S *Palinodia*.

This is a great, and in some degree a melancholy truth; and it would be very melancholy if we did not perceive that we are now merely in a transition state, and that a new and better era must ultimately issue from our present chaos. The world has had the same experience as St. Paul, who declares that, when he was a child, he thought and spake as a child; but, becoming a man, he regarded only the things of a man. The man has, however, yet to learn that amusement as well as work is necessary, and what is the true sort for him. With all our progress we have not progressed into half the ease and gaiety that our ancestors possessed. With all our improvements we have not improved into their habit of enjoying themselves. With all our triumphs of machinery and of knowledge, we have won no leisure, no happiness, not even our daily bread. We have lost all that our ancestors possessed, and have gained nothing which they had not. That is a poor story to tell; that is a strange result of *progress* and *civilisation*.

Progress! Is it a progress into poverty, toil, and wretchedness that we boast of? Let those boast who win. Civilisation! Is it civilisation to have famine and expulsion from house and home in Ireland; "work, work, work!" and Bremhill and Goatacre in England?

Ah! there is something still hugely wrong! Which-ever way we turn, a giant-monster meets us, and startles us out of our dreams of poetry. We call this an enlightened age. In what is it enlightened? With all our light and knowledge, can any man tell us, even on this question of May-day, how the people, as one universal people, could turn out for a single day, and enjoy themselves? No!

The mills want us, the shops want us, the banks and railroads want us. We want our daily bread, and Mammon wants his. He opens all his thousand mouths of gaping smithies, workshops, and offices, to swallow us up. We have won millions, but we have not yet won leisure for a single day! Where is the man that does say that we are wiser than our ancestors?

And yet Nature and the human heart are the same. The one has all her beauties and delights still to offer, the other has all its glorious capacities to enjoy. Oh! how beautiful and amiable is Nature at this moment! How green is her grass! how tender is her foliage! The cuckoo has returned from far lands, and shouts her gladness once more. The nightingale pours hymns of love and worship from every bough, more beautiful than Pindar, or even David, ever wrote. The cowslip and the primrose bathe in dewy meadows, and breathe up incense to the heaven that smiles on them. The whole country is a paradise of love, and youth, and beauty; and it *should* be the holiday of every man, woman, and child, now to break loose from labour and care, and go forth and enjoy it. This *should* be the festival of May. Without returning to the hobby-horse, and the more foolish customs of our ancestors, we should, *at least*, return to nature. We should make it the holiday of May—if not on one day, at least on another—for every soul to go out, and abandon itself to the general joy of the season. To breathe the fresh, pure air; to revel in the feeling of all the delicious greenness, and amid the heaven-suggesting flowers; to let the “work, work, work!” cease for at least one day, in the weary, whirling brain; and the heart, opening to the perception of the mighty joy that covers the whole face of the earth, repose for a single day on the sense of God’s goodness, and feel that it still can sympathise in the pleasures of its fellow-men. This *should*

be the holiday of May; and I would say, let it be so for all that can. God never meant that all the loveliness of May should be left to the bird upon the bough, and the beast in the field; and that man, the noblest of his creatures, should be imprisoned in the workshop, and have none of it. Shall the otter bask in the sedge, the snake on the bank, and the very toad in its hole, and shall not man bask too? Shall not the time once more come, when this may be a holiday for all, and there may be a dance on the village-green, and a dance in the heart of every poor man at the festival of youth and nature—the poetical May-day.

Such a day, no doubt, is coming. The peasant is educating into a man, and time will teach him to blend manly amusement with manly intellect. But the higher classes of society must learn to meet him, not by condescension, but by a true amalgamation of interests and ideas, arising out of the actualities of life. In such a future shaping of social life, it is clear that our OLD SQUIRE can be made nothing of; and after considering his successors, whom we shall now present to the reader, it will remain a question, whether the *onward* will not demand yet another phasis of aristocratic existence.

THE YOUNG SQUIRE.

By smiling fortune blessed
With large demesnes, hereditary wealth.

SOMERVILLE.

The Old Squire and the Young Squire are the antipodes of each other. They are representatives of two entirely different states of society in this country; the one, but the vestige of that which has been; the other, the full and perfect image of that which is. The old squires are like the last fading and shrivelled leaves of autumn that yet hang on the tree. A few more days will pass;

age will send one of his nipping nights, and down they will twirl, and be swept away into the oblivious hiding-places of death, to be seen no more. But the young squire is one of the full-blown blossoms of another summer. He is flaunting in the sunshine of a state of wealth and luxury, which we, as our fathers in their days did, fancy can by no possibility be carried many degrees farther, and yet we see it every day making some new and extraordinary advance.

It is obvious that there are many intervening stages of society, amongst our country gentry, between the old squire and the young, as there are intermediate degrees of age. The old squires are those of the completely last generation, who have outlived their contemporaries, and have made a dead halt on the ground of their old habits, sympathies, and opinions, and are resolved to quit none of them for what they call the follies and new-fangled notions of a younger, and, of course, more degenerate race. They are continually crying, "Oh, it never was so in my day!" They point to tea, and stoves in churches, and the universal use of umbrellas, parasols, cork-soled shoes, warming-pans, and carriages, as incontestable proofs of the rapidly-increasing effeminacy of mankind. But between these old veterans and their children, there are the men of the middle ages, who have, more or less, become corrupted with modern ways and indulgences; have, more or less, introduced modern furniture, modern hours, modern education, and tastes, and books; and have, more or less, fallen into the modern custom of spending a certain part of the year in London. With these we have nothing whatever to do. The old squire is the landmark of the ancient state of things, and his son Tom is the epitome of the new; all between is a mere transition and evanescent condition.

Tom Chesselton was duly sent by his father to Eton as a boy, where he became a most accomplished scholar in cricket, boxing, horses, and dogs, and made the acquaintance of several lords, who taught him the way of letting his father's money slip easily through his fingers without burning them, and engrafted him besides with a fine stock of truly aristocratic tastes, which will last him his whole life. From Eton he was duly transferred to Oxford, where he wore his gown and trencher-cap with a peculiar grace, and gave a classic finish to his taste in horses, in driving, and in ladies. Having completed his education with great *éclat*, he was destined by his father to a few years' soldiership in the militia, as being devoid of all danger, and, moreover, giving opportunities for seeing a great deal of the good old substantial families in different parts of the kingdom. But Tom turned up his nose, or rather his handsome upper lip, with a most consummate scorn at so grovelling a proposal, and assured his father that nothing but a commission in the Guards, where several of his noble friends were doing distinguished honour to their country, by the display of their fine figures, would suit him. The old gentleman shrugged his shoulders and was silent, thinking that the six thousand pounds purchase-money would be quite as well at fifteen per cent. in turnpike-shares a little longer. But Tom, luckily, was not doomed to rusticate long in melancholy under his patrimonial oaks: his mother's brother, an old bachelor of immense wealth, died just in time, leaving Tom's sister, Lady Spankitt, thirty thousand pounds in the funds; and Tom, as heir-at-law, his great Irish estates. Tom, on the very first vacancy, bought into the Guards, and was soon marked out by the ladies as one of the most *distingué* officers that ever wore a uniform. In truth, Tom was a very handsome fellow; that he owed to his parents, who, in their day, were as noble-looking a

couple as ever danced at a county-ball, or graced the balcony of a race-stand.

Tom soon married; but he did not throw himself away sentimentally on a mere face; he achieved the hand of the sister of one of his old college chums, and now brother-officer—the Lady Barbara Ridemdown. An earl's daughter was something in the world's eye; but such an earl's daughter as Lady Barbara was the height of Tom's ambition. She was equally celebrated for her wit, her beauty, and her large fortune. Tom had won her from amidst the very blaze of popularity and the most splendid offers. Their united fortunes enabled them to live in the highest style. Lady Barbara's rank and connexions demanded it, and the spirit of our young squire required it as much. Tom Chesselton disdained to be a whit behind any of his friends, however wealthy or highly titled. His tastes were purely aristocratic; with him, dress, equipage, and amusements, were matters of science. He knew, both from a proud instinct and from study, what was precisely the true *ton* in every article of dress or equipage, and the exact etiquette in every situation. But Lady Barbara panted to visit the continent, where she had already spent some years, and which presented so many attractions to her elegant tastes. Tom had elegant tastes too, in his way; and to the continent they went. The old squire never set his foot on even the coast of Calais: when he has seen it from Dover, he has only wished that he could have a few hundred tons of gunpowder, and blow it into the air; but Tom and Lady Barbara have lived on the continent for years.

This was a bitter pill for the old squire. When Tom purchased his commission in the Guards, and when he opened a house like a palace, on his wedding with Lady Barbara, the old gentleman felt proud of his son's figure,

and proud of his connexions. "Ah," said he, "Tom's a lad of spirit; he'll sow his wild oats, and come to his senses presently." But when he fairly embarked for France, with a troop of servants, and a suite of carriages, like a nobleman, then did the old fellow fairly curse and swear, and call him all the unnatural and petticoat-pinioned fools in his vocabulary, and prophesy his bringing his ninepence to a groat. Tom and Lady Barbara, however, upheld the honour of England all over the continent. In Paris, at the baths of Germany, at Vienna, Florence, Venice, Rome, Naples—everywhere, they were distinguished by their fine persons, their fine equipage, their exquisite tastes, and their splendid entertainments. They were courted and caressed by all the distinguished, both of their own countrymen and of foreigners. Tom's horses and equipage were the admiration of the natives. He drove, he rode, he yachted, to universal admiration; and, meantime, his lady visited all the galleries and works of art, and received in her house all the learned and the literary of all countries. There, you always found artists, poets, travellers, critics, *dilettanti*, and connoisseurs, of all nations and creeds.

They have again honoured their country with their presence; and who so much the fashion as they? They are, of course, *au fait* in every matter of taste and fashion; on all questions of foreign life, manners, and opinions, their judgment is the law. Their town-house is in Eaton-square; and what a house is that! What a paradise of fairy splendour!—what a mine of wealth, in the most superb furniture, in books in all languages, paintings, statuary, and precious fragments of the antique, collected out of every classical city and country. If you see a most exquisitely tasteful carriage, with a most fascinatingly beautiful lady in it, in the Park, amidst all the brilliant

concourse of the Ring, you may be sure you see the celebrated Lady Barbara Chesselton; and you cannot fail to recognise Tom Chesselton the moment you clap eyes on him, by his distinguished figure, and the splendid creature on which he is mounted—to say nothing of the perfection of his groom, and the steed which he also bestrides. Tom never crosses the back of a horse of less value than a thousand pounds; and if you want to know really what horses are, you must go down to his villa at Wimbledon, if you are not lucky enough to catch a sight of him proceeding to a levee, or driving his four-in-hand to Ascot or Epsom. All Piccadilly has been seen to stand, lost in silent admiration, as he has driven his splendid britchzka along it, with his perfection of a little tiger by his side; and such cattle as never besides were seen in even harness of such richness and elegance. Nay, some scores of ambitious young whips became sick of their envy of his superb gauntlet driving-gloves.

But, in fact, in Tom's case, as in all others, you have only to know his companions to know him; and who are they but Chesterfield, Conyngham, D'Orsay, Eglintoun, my Lord Waterford, and men of similar figure and reputation. To say that he is well known to all the principal frequenters of the Carlton Club; that his carriages are of the most perfect make ever turned out by Windsor; that his harness is only from Shipley's; and that Stultz has the honour of gracing his person with his habiliments; is to say that our young squire is one of the most perfect men of fashion in England. Lady Barbara and himself have a common ground of elegance and taste, and knowledge of the first principles of genuine aristocratic life; but they have very different pursuits, arising from the difference of their genius, and they follow them with the utmost mutual approbation.

Lady Barbara is at once the worshipped beauty, the woman of fashion and of literature. No one has turned so many heads, by the loveliness of her person, and the bewitching fascination of her manners, as Lady Barbara. She is a wit, a poetess, a connoisseur in art; and what can be so dangerously delightful as all these characters in a fashionable beauty, and a woman, moreover, of such rank and wealth? She does the honours of her house to the mutual friends and noble connexions of her husband and herself with a perpetual grace; but she has, besides, her evenings for the reception of her literary and artistic acquaintance and admirers. And who, of all the throng of authors, artists, critics, journalists, connoisseurs, and amateurs, who flock there, are not her admirers? Lady Barbara Chesselton writes travels, novels, novellets, philosophical reflections, poems, and almost every species of thing which ever has been written—such is the universality of her knowledge, experience, and genius; and who does not hasten to be the first to pour out in reviews, magazines, daily and hebdomadal journals, the earliest and most fervid words of homage and admiration? Lady Barbara edits an annual, and is a contributor to the “Keepsake;” and in her kindness, she is sure to find out all the nice young men about the press; to encourage them by her smile, and to raise them by her fascinating conversation and her brilliant saloons, above those depressing influences of a too sensitive modesty, which so weighs on the genius of the youth of this age; so that she sends them away, all heart and soul, in the service of herself and literature, which are the same thing; and away they go, extemporising praises on her ladyship, and spreading them through leaves of all sizes, to the wondering eyes of readers all the world over. Publishers run with their unsaleable manuscripts, and beg Lady Barbara to have the goodness to put her

name on the title, knowing by golden experience that one stroke of her pen, like the point of a galvanic wire, will turn all the dulness of the dead mass into flame. Lady Barbara is not barbarous enough to refuse so simple and complimentary a request; nay, her benevolence extends on every hand. Distressed authors, male and female, who have not her rank, and therefore most clearly not her genius, beg her to take their literary bantlings under her wing; and with a heart as full of generous sympathies as her pen is of magic, she writes but her name on the title as an "Open Sesame!" and lo! the dead becomes alive; her genius permeates the whole volume, which that moment puts forth wings of popularity, and flies into every bookseller's shop and every circulating library in the kingdom.

Such is the life of glory and Christian benevolence which Lady Barbara daily leads, making authors, critics, and publishers all happy together, by the overflowing radiance of her indefatigable and inexhaustible genius, though she sometimes slyly laughs to herself, and says—"What a thing is a title! if it were not for that, would all these people come to me?" While Tom, who is member of parliament for the little borough of Dearish, most patriotically discharges his duty by pairing off—visits the classic grounds of Ascot, Epsom, Newmarket, or Goodwood, or traverses the moors of Scotland and Ireland in pursuit of grouse. But once a year they indulge their filial virtues in a visit to the old squire. The old squire, we are sorry to say, has grown of late years queer and snappish, and does not look on this visit quite as gratefully as he should. "If they would but come," he says, "in a quiet way, as I used to ride over and see my father in his time, why I should be right glad to see them; but here they come, like the first regiment of an invading army, and God help those who are old and want to be quiet!"

The old gentleman, moreover, is continually haranguing about Tom's folly and extravagance. It is his perpetual topic to his wife, and wife's maiden sister, and Wagstaff. Wagstaff only shakes his head, and says, "Young blood!—young blood!" but Mrs. Chesselton and the maiden sister say, "Oh! Mr. Chesselton, you don't consider: Tom has great connexions, and he is obliged to keep a certain establishment. Things are different now to what they were in our time. Tom is universally allowed to be a very fine man, and Lady Barbara is a very fine woman, and a prodigious clever woman!—a prodigious clever woman!—and you ought to be proud of them, Chesselton." At which the old gentleman breaks out, if he be a little elevated over his wine—

When the Duke of Leeds shall married be
 To a fine young lady of high quality,
 How happy will that gentlewoman be
 In his grace of Leeds' good company!
 She shall have all that's fine and fair,
 And the best of silk and satin to wear;
 And ride in a coach, to take the air,
 And have a house in St. James's-square.

Lady Barbara always professes great affection and reverence for the old gentleman, and sends him many merry and kind compliments and messages; and sends him, moreover, her new books as soon as they are out, most magnificently bound; but all won't do. He only says, "If she'd please me, she'd give up that cursed opera-box. Why, the rent of that thing—only to sit in and hear Italian women squealing and squalling, and to see impudent, outlandish baggages kicking up their heels higher than any decent heads ought to be—the rent, I say, would maintain a parish rector, or keep half-a-dozen parish schools agoing." As for her books, that all the world besides are in raptures about, the old squire turns them over as a dog would a hot dumpling; says nothing

but a Bible ought to be so extravagantly bound; and professes that "the matter may be all very fine, but he can make neither head nor tail of it." Yet, whenever Lady Barbara is with him, she is sure to talk and smile herself in about half an hour into his high favour; and he begins to run about to show her this and that, and calls out every now and then, "Let Lady Barbara see this, and go to look at that." She can do anything with him, except get him to London. "London!" he exclaims; "no; get me to Bedlam at once! What has a rusty old fellow, like me, to do at London? If I could find again the jolly set that used to meet, thirty years ago, at the Star and Garter, Pall Mall, it might do; but London isn't what London used to be. It's too fine by half for a country squire, and would drive me distracted in twenty-four hours, with its everlasting noise and nonsense."

But the old squire does get pretty well distracted with the annual visit. Down come driving the young squire and Lady Barbara, with a train of carriages like a fleet of men-of-war, leading the way with their travelling-coach and four horses. Up they twirl to the door of the old hall. The old bell rings a thundering peal through the house. Doors fly open—out come servants—down come the young guests from their carriages; and while embraces and salutations are going on in the drawing-room, the hall is fast filling with packages upon packages; servants are running to and fro along the passages; grooms and carriages are moving off to the stables without; there is lifting and grunting at portmanteaus and imperials, as they are borne up-stairs; while ladies' maids and nursemaids are crying out, "Oh, take care of that trunk!" "Mind that ban'-box!" "Oh, gracious! that is my lady's dressing-case; it will be down, and be totally ruined!" Dogs are barking; children crying, or romping about,

and the whole house in the most blessed state of bustle and confusion.

For a week the hurly-burly continues; in pour all the great people to see Tom and Lady Barbara. There are shootings in the mornings, and great dinner parties in the evenings. Tom and my lady have sent down before them plenty of hampers of such wines as the old squire neither keeps nor drinks, and they have brought their plate along with them; and the old house itself is astonished at the odours of champagne, claret, and hock, that pervade, and at the glitter of gold and silver in it. The old man is full of attention and politeness, both to his guests and to their guests; but he is half worried with the children, and t'other half worried with so many fine folks; and muddled with drinking things that he is not used to, and with late hours. Wagstaff has fled—as he always does on such occasions—to a farm-house on the verge of the estate. The hall, and the parsonage, and even the gardener's-house, are all full of beds for guests, and servants, and grooms. Presently, the old gentleman, in his morning rides, sees some of the young bucks shooting the pheasants in his home-park, where he never allows them to be disturbed, and comes home in a fume, to hear that the house is turned upside-down by the host of scarlet-breeched and powdered livery-servants, and that they have turned all the maids' heads with sweethearting. But at length the day of departure arrives, and all sweep away as suddenly and rapidly as they came; and the old squire sends off for Wagstaff, and blesses his stars that what he calls "the annual hurricane" is over.

But what a change will there be when the old squire is dead! Already have Tom and Lady Barbara walked over the ground, and planned it. That horrid fright of an old house, as they call it, will be swept as clean away as if it

had not stood there five hundred years. A grand Elizabethan pile is already decreed to succeed it. The fashionable architect will come driving down in his smart Brougham, with all his plans and papers. A host of mechanics will come speedily after him, by coach or by wagon; booths will be seen rising all round the old place, which will vanish away, and its superb successor rise where it stood like a magical vision. Already are ponderous cases lying loaded, in London, with massive mantelpieces of the finest Italian marble, marble busts, and heads of old Greek and Roman heroes, genuine burial urns from Herculaneum and Pompeii, and vessels of terra-cotta, gloriously-sculptured vases, and even columns of verde antique—all from classic Italy—to adorn the walls of this same noble new house.

But, meantime, spite of the large income of Tom and Lady Barbara, the old squire has strange suspicions of mortgages, and dealings with Jews. He has actually inklings of horrid post-obits; and groans as he looks on his old oaks, as he rides through his woods and parks, foreseeing their overthrow; nay, he fancies he sees the land-agent amongst his quiet old farmers, like a wild cat in a rabbit warren, startling them out of their long dream of ease and safety, with news of double rents, and notices to quit, to make way for threshing-machines, winnowing-machines, corn-crushers, patent ploughs, scufflers, scarifiers, and young men of more enterprise. And, sure enough, such will be the order of the day the moment the estate falls to the YOUNG SQUIRE.



JUNE.

It is the time of roses;
We pluck them as we pass.

Hood.

THE Spring is gone! the Summer is come! Beautiful as Spring is, and delicate and poetical her children—the snowdrop, the violet, the primrose, and the cowslip—we have seen and loved them once more, and we will no longer regret them. As they came, and passed away amid the lingering chills of winter, we welcomed them and we mourned over their departure. No season like spring makes us so sensible, by its fleeting beauties, of the fleeting time; but summer is the season of full-blown enjoyment; and now

let us enjoy it. The great, wise monarch of Jerusalem exclaimed, in reviewing these very things, "Come on, therefore; let us enjoy the good things that are present, and let us speedily use the creatures, like as in youth; let us fill ourselves with costly wine and ointments, and let no flower of the spring pass by us; let us crown ourselves with rosebuds before they be withered." That was wisdom in Solomon's time, and it is wisdom now. It is wisdom to grasp the good that is before and around us, and not to waste time in lamenting for what is gone, or may soon be going. And June seems the season made for the universal rejoicing of all the creatures of existence. The country is arrayed in the fullest and newest beauty; the trees are once more thick with leaves—but leaves of the most delicate freshness. It is, as Spenser says, wherever we turn our eyes, "a leafie luxurie." But to describe it, we will, as in the last month, present an actual account of the progress of a June, as carefully noted down at the time:—

June 3rd.—Beautiful rain, and the whole atmosphere changed. All soft and delightful. Went to Stoke Woods, near Claremont, with the children, to look at birds'-nests—not to steal them. Nightingales in abundance, but their nests not to be found. Found a jay's nest, on which the bird was sitting; but the eggs were very different to what I seemed to recollect—very much like the blackbird's—of the same colour, but less distinctly spotted, and coloured most at the point, with occasional flourishes, like the eggs of a yellow-hammer. Young pheasants running about. In this country natural history is much impeded by game-keepers. Just at this time of the year, when birds and insects abound, and are full of interest, you can scarcely go into a wood but the keepers are upon you, all alarm lest you should disturb the sitting pheasants and broods of young ones; and so it continues till shooting-time.

The all-important pheasants are not to be disturbed; and thus all the researches of the naturalist are suspended in the woods, just at the time when the most curious habits of various wild creatures, bird, beast, and insect, might be witnessed. Botanical research shares the same fate from the same cause.

In the midst of the thickets we had nearly trodden upon a viper two feet three inches long, black as ink, which we killed. It would appear that we have in this country two species of venomous snake—the black kind, and the lesser red-brown kind, or adder, found on the sunny heaths. The woodman said that this owed its deep jet blackness to its recent change of skin. Perhaps so; but this was evidently of a totally different kind to the brown adder of the moors. Besides its intense inky colour, and its poison-fangs in the mouth, it had a sting at the end of its tail. The keeper, to whose house we took it, pronounced it of the most venomous kind.

We found a cuckoo's egg in a blackbird's nest. The egg of the cuckoo very much resembles that of the blackbird, but is smaller. The crickets were singing on the warm heath, as on the hearth of a cottage. Turtle-doves were abundant in the woods; they frequent only the woods of the south of England, coming hither from warmer climates; I never saw one in the woods of the Midland Counties. A solitary primrose still lingered, here and there, in the cooler dells of the woods, like a youth's gay thought in the bosom of earnest, ardent manhood.

June 5th.—The Austrian briar, the Guelder-rose, orange-poppies, and Solomon's seal, in flower in the garden. In the fields, yellow rattle and perennial-clover. The air of grass fields is delicious now with clover and other flowers. The butcher-birds are noisy—a sign that they have young.

The shepherd lads on the downs now, in the fine weather, catch the wheat-ears by a very simple process: these birds, on the passing of a cloud, hurry to the holes in the ground in which are their nests; but the shepherd boys rear up long pieces of turf on the downs, here and there, so as to form little burrows; and the birds, in the bright weather, going a good way from their holes, on the alarm of a lad and his dog suddenly coming amongst them, run under these reared turfs, as the nearest shelter, and so are taken with the hand.

June 6th.—Went to St. George's Hill, near Byfleet. The air delicious after a day or two's rain. A light breeze and most delicate softness of atmosphere. The pine-woods pouring forth their delightful aroma in the sun. The forest turf and the different leaves breathing out their peculiar fragrance. The young oak-leaves now very tender and cheerful. Hawthorn blossom everywhere. The brooms glorious. It was a day which recalled many pleasant days of youth, spent amid youthful friends, to which we look back with a similar feeling to that with which we look forward to heaven. After long experience of the world, its pomps and vanities, its rivalries and ambitious strivings, there is nothing like the enjoyment found amongst intelligent, simple, and loving hearts, where we know that there is affection and sincerity.

SPRING-FLOWERS.

But, oh, ye spring-flowers! oh, ye early friends!
Where are ye, one and all?
The sun still shines, and summer rain descends,
They call forth flowers, but 'tis not ye they call.
On the mountains,
By the fountains,
In the woodland, dim and grey,
Flowers are springing, ever springing,
But the spring-flowers, where are they?

Then, oh, ye spring-flowers! oh, ye early friends!
 Where are ye? I would know
 When the sun shines, when summer rain descends,
 Why still blow flowers, but 'tis not ye that blow?
 On the mountains,
 By the fountains,
 In the woodlands, dim and grey,
 Flowers are springing, ever springing,
 But the spring-flowers, where are they?

Oh then, ye spring-flowers! oh, ye early friends!
 Are ye together gone
 Up with the soul of nature that ascends,
 Up with the clouds and odours, one by one?
 O'er the mountains,
 O'er the fountains,
 O'er the woodlands, dim and grey,
 Flowers are springing, ever springing,
 On heaven's highlands, far away!

Hotter and hotter glows the summer sun,
 But you it cannot wake,
 Myriads of flowers, like armies marching on,
 Blaze on the hills, and glitter in the brake.
 On the mountains,
 Round the fountains,
 In the woodlands, dim and grey,
 Flowers are springing, ever springing,
 But the spring-flowers, where are they?

Oh, no more! oh, never, never more!
 Shall friend or flower return,
 Till deadly Winter, old, and cold, and frore,
 Has laid all nature lifeless in his urn.
 O'er the mountains
 And the fountains,
 Through the woodland, dim and grey,
 Death and Winter, dread companions,
 Have pursued their destined way.

Then oh, ye spring-flowers! oh, ye early friends!
 Dead, buried, one and all;
 When the sun shines, and summer rain descends,
 And call forth flowers, 'tis ye that they shall call.
 On the mountains,
 By the fountains,
 In the woodlands, dim and grey,
 Flowers are springing, souls are singing,
 On heaven's hills, and ye are they!

The pheasants on St. George's Hill were lying in the warm heather, within view. Numbers of insects were on the wing, or to be found on the young foliage and the grass. The wood-argus, the peacock, and other butterflies, moths, pink and purple, yellow with brown spots, &c., come out towards evening. May-flies were still abroad, and stone-flies standing on the boles of the trees, head downwards. Bracken-clocks swarmed on the fern and young oak-leaves, and a peculiar kind of dragon-fly darted from place to place. There were numbers of gipsies on the heaths—those wild off-shoots of humanity, who have shown us, more than anything else, the pliability of our nature. Give a man a palace, and it will hardly contain him and his greatness; give him only a gipsy's wigwam, and he has room and to spare. Give him a coach and four, and he is so "cribbed, cabined, and confined," that he has seldom room at his side for a poor relation, and his coachman, in flaxen wig and with dangling cords of gold or silver, drives the poor beggar out of the way, lest the horses should tread on him. Give him a gipsy's horse, or a couple of asses, and he carries house, goods, chattels, wife, and nine or ten children, all away together, and has whole woods and wilds to enjoy himself in.

But if the days of June are now warm, and brilliant, and beautiful, ah! how soft and beautiful is a June night! Oh! what is there that can equal its pleasant obscurity, which is yet not darkness! What can equal the calm, clear, lofty beauty of the sky, where the moon beams like a celestial creature, as she is, and the evening star burns with the radiance of immortal youth. There is a balmy softness in the air. The trees stand in shadowy masses, that seem to listen to the still and musing sky above them. There is a soft gloom beneath umbrageous hedges, or as you walk through shrubberies and plantations, that is

peopled with all the tender feelings of the present, and the tender memories of the past. What would we not give to go hand in hand again with those with whom we have enjoyed such hours, and talked of death, and wondered who should first explore its mysteries—and *they* were those first? and we walk on, through deepening shadows, and wonder *what* and *where* they now are.

How every place and scene, on this still and thoughtful night, seems to unlock its secret essence. Every spot has its own sentiment, and its peculiar odour. Here the leafy aroma of trees; there the scent of forest turf; here the earthy smell of deep, rich soil; and there the fragrant breath of sweetbriar, or delicious effusion from a clover or bean-field. Near the hamlet, the warm, rich odour of peat, or of the wood-fire, announces that the weary labourer has supped, and perhaps now sleeps, unconscious of the cricket that sings in the garden-hedge, or the nocturnal thrush in the old elm that overcanopies his dwelling.

How delightful is the meanest sound of a summer night! How the moth, dashing against the cottage pane, or fluttering amongst the garden leaves, enriches the stillness! with what a lordly boom the soaring cockchaffer mounts past your ear into the flowery lime! How the smallest runnel murmurs aloud! how palpably the mountain-stream sounds along! how deeply sonorous is the distant waterfall, or millweir. The frogs in the marshes seem to be turning a thousand wheels; and the dorhawk, the cuckoo, and the nightingale, give wood, and meadow, and tree, their different charms. The quails pipe from the green corn, the curlews from the far moorlands; and if you be near the ocean, what a voice of majesty is that! full of the meaning of ages, and of the poetry of the infinite!

Ay, walk, happy youth! in the flush of thy happiness, along the dusky margin of that old, old sea-beach. The

soft waves break in flame at thy feet; hear the stroke of an oar, somewhere in the dim obscure; list the wild and shrill cries of tern and plover, that, never sleeping soundly, come sweeping past, and plunge onward, unseen. There is not a sound that, heard to-night, shall not mingle with thy thoughts and hopes of life, and may, years hence, pierce through thy memory, followed by an ocean of tears. But hush! there are voices, shrill and laughing voices. The musing young man springs onward, forgetting the poetry of the ocean and of night, in the more vivid poetry of hope and love. Let him go! For young, or for old, for every human being that has a soul alive to the impressions of God in nature, the calm and the gloom, and every sound and sensation of a summer-night, are holy.

June 12th.—Flowers in the fields—scabious, campanula glomerata, wild Guelder-rose, elder-flower, thrift, red valerian. In gardens: borage, phlox, day-lily, gladioles, &c.

The various grasses which make mowing-grass beautiful, are the perennial clover, filling the air with sweetness; the yellow goat's beard; the dog daisies, whitening all around; the chervil, under hedges and trees; the yellow rattle; the lotus; the beautiful quake grass, which all children have delighted to pull; the poas, fescues; rough cocksfoot, on banks, amongst thickets, and in rank grounds; the wild oats and darnels by the waysides, with red, pensile panicles; and in the thickets, the foxtail and timothy, with their spikes; the graceful melic, in the shade of woods; the light air-grass and purple burnet, in meadows.

The corn, now growing tall, becomes very pleasant to behold, and to walk through along the field-paths. The rye, tall as your head; its cerulean ears having long been shot, and the wheat now beginning to shoot. The pecu-

liar flowers, and appearance of corn-fields, have something in them extremely beautiful and cheerful. The red poppies, the peerless blue of the viper's-bugloss, the corn-bottles, the corn-marigolds, the scarlet anagallis, and the crimson of the cockle, make a brilliant spectacle to the eye of the lover of nature, though not of the farmer. These are the productions of sandy lands, where they flourished in Job's time, who talks of lands producing "thistles instead of wheat, and cockles instead of barley."

June 16th.—Rye cut. The wild-rose, elder-flower, and the bitter-sweet, all signs of confirmed summer, are out. Evening primroses of a splendid kind are to be seen in the sandy fields of Surrey.

June 18th.—Thunder-storms burst forth in grandeur; the rain descends in splashing torrents, rushing in brooks along your walks, and around your house, stopping your grates with the gravel and fallen leaves, or the like, which it bears along with it. In villages and country towns, you see the people suddenly start forth into the streets, with bags and old coats upon their shoulders, to open their drains with fire-shovels, spades, rakes, or almost anything which comes to hand. Amongst mountains, the effect of such a storm is instantaneous and startling. Where one minute all is silence—profound, hot, and breathless silence—a few minutes afterwards the roar of streams bursts forth around in a hundred places, hurrying down the declivities; the glens are loud with turbid brooks; water rushes along the roads at the feet of the hills; and where you just now walked on dry ground, you, perhaps, hurry back and find that you must wade half-leg deep. Who has not had such adventures amongst the mountains, flying for shelter to some rock or shepherd's hut, and enjoying the crash of thunder on the shrouded hill-top, pealing and reverberating again from a score of different eminences;

the sonorous rush of waters down the steeps, in lines of white foam, and the wild sough and murmur through the whole darkened air? And then, when it is over, to step forth—to see the clear blue sky, freed again of clouds, shine high and pure, the sun glitter on the smoking rocks and hill-sides, and on every fern-leaf and blade of grass around you, and the air loud with descending streams, yet soft as the breath of an infant.

At this season, how delightful are the valleys of the Peak of Derbyshire! To the natives of the south of England, there is something peculiar in the scenery, and one effect is striking. You come back again from summer to spring. In the year in which I wrote this journal, going suddenly from Surrey to Derbyshire, I found the blue-bells and primroses, which had all vanished in the south, were there in fullest bloom; and not a wild rose or an elder-flower yet out. The hawthorn was just in blossom, and the laburnum in the grounds at Ilam, by Dove-dale. At this moment, in the south, the flowers of the Guelder-rose are falling in showers of vegetable snow, and the gardens are gay with alkanets, escholtzias, syringa, pinks, œnothera, Lindleiana, Clarkia, lupines, white peonies, roses, alchimilla, common yellow sedum, cut bell-flower, and the ivy-leaved bell-flower, common garden speedwell, narrow-leaved bugloss, variegated mimulus, rocket, larkspur, mignonette, *loasa nitida*, sweet peas, red pheasant's-eye, *nemophila insignis* and *aurita*, African hibiscus, French marigold, ten-weeks' stock, *Collinsia bicolor*, candy-tuft, snapdragons of many colours, mountain cistus, thick-flowering fumitory, yellow fumitory, Turk's-cap lily, balsam, *media elegans*, foxglove, red and white, irises, &c.

The songs of nightingales are over; and those fine songsters, like many other songsters of our acquaintance, on whose education much cost and labour have been

bestowed, are now reduced, by family cares, to very homely creatures. The noise they make when their young are hatched, resembles “ weet, weet, thuck, thuck, thuck, hurrur, hurrur, hur.”

But summer has now established its reign. The scythe rings in the fields, and all the bustle of hay-harvest begins. Here are once more the merry sunburnt groups in the hay-fields; hay hanging in the trees of the lanes; everything is warm and dry. We delight now in the deep, cool grass of shady valleys, where the cool stream runs lightly, and the quivering leaves of overhanging trees cast dancing circles of light on the gravelly bottom below; where the lovely azure crowfoot salutes you from the margin, and the purple comfrey dips its leaves in the water. On the trees chestnuts are conspicuous, nuts on the hazels, and apples in the orchard. Gooseberries, currants, and strawberries, are ripe, as June takes his leave. The cuckoo departs, and glow-worms come out on heaths and banks of lawns. Anon, and the thirsty, fainting, sun-tanned summer, will show changes of colour in grass, in leaf, and in corn. Anon, we shall be heard saying—

It is the summer of the fleeting year:
 On the brown sward the flowers are faint and few;
 All songs are hushed, and but the clear halloo
 And larum of the bird-boy reach the ear;
 Through the warm air floats far the limes' perfume,
 And wayside boughs have lost the rose's bloom.

That is June! the carnival of nature and of man! Who does not rejoice in it? Dost *thou* not rejoice in it, my reader? Open thy heart wide as it can expand itself; fling abroad thy imagination over the world, and recollect for how many millions of our fellow-men is June making a paradise, and preparing joys. In what dells, and glens, and pleasant lanes, in the vicinity of ancient villages, and overhung by dewy and odorous boughs, do

thousands of happy children ramble, and gather flowers, and weave them into posies and garlands, and are as blest as the angels in heaven, knowing no sorrow, and fearing no morrow! By what old wells, bubbling up in shade or sunshine, do there sit poets and poetesses of God's making, glorious creatures who shall make heaven glad with their songs, though they never be heard on earth, drinking all that earth and sky have of beauty and sweetness! By cottage-doors, where the flowery honeysuckle stoops down to bid them another good-morrow, do there sit feeble old men and women, who have nearly done their day's work on the earth; and in the sunshine, and in the breath of flowers that falls upon them, feel the throb of joy in their bosoms that shall accompany them to the eternal gates of God!

But not over England alone does the summer fling its beauty and its gladness; throughout all Europe and America, and over many a region besides, are not mighty and populous nations all astir in the open air, filling their souls with a thousand natural and social enchantments? God sees them from his invisible throne, and doubtless rejoices in their joy; and the genius of man has made him of late years a happy participator in the divine beneficence. His steam ships are speeding over the ocean in all directions, and up all beautiful rivers, to bear weary and town-worn mortals to scenes of beauty, of novelty, and refreshment. The poet quits his winter study, and is off into the mountains and the woods of distant lands; the painter has sold his pictures in the exhibitions, and is off, glad-hearted, to sketch on heath and highlands, and amid the fresh waves of wild, far-off islands, for more. Merchant and lawyer, mechanic and manufacturer, if they cannot get away so far, dream of it immensely, and plan *summer* excursions in the *autumn*. Meantime, to what temporary and yet

delicious snatches of country and seaside do our railways carry out our myriads of thirsting and adust population!

Reader! the thoughts of all the delights of June are too mighty for me. I fling down my pen, and start at once for the Peak of Derbyshire. Welcome once more the caves, and pinnaced rocks, and rushing waters of Dovedale, and the airy summits of Axe-edge or Kinderscout.

The green and breezy hills!—away!—
 My heart is light, my foot is free;
 And, resting on the topmost peak,
 The fresh'ning gale shall fan my cheek—
 The hills were ever dear to me!

WHITSUNTIDE.

'Tis merry Whitsuntide; and merrily
 Holiday goes in hamlet and green field;
 Nature and men seem joined once more to try
 The strength of Care, and force the carle to yield.
 Summer abroad holds flowery revelry;
 For revelry the village-bells are pealed.
 The season's self seems made for rural pleasure;
 And rural joy flows with o'erflowing measure.

Go where you will through England's happy valleys,
 Green grows the grass, flowers bask, and wild bees hum;
 And ever and anon, with joyous sallies,
 Shouting and music, and the busy drum,
 Tell you afar where Mirth her rustics rallies
 In dusty sports, amid the noise and hum
 Of the Royal Oak, or bowling-green inclosure,
 With bower and bench for smoking and composure.

May's jolly dance is past, and, hanging high,
 Her garlands swing and wither in the sun;
 And now abroad gay, posied banners fly,
 Followed by peaceful troops, and boys that run
 To see their sires go marching solemnly,
 Shouldering their wands; and youths with ribands won
 From fresh, fair hands, that yielded them with pride,
 And proudly worn this merry Whitsuntide.

And then succeeds a lovelier sight—the dames,
 Wives, mothers, and arch sigh-awakening lasses,
 Filling each gazing wight with wounds and flames,
 Yet looking each demurely as she passes,

With flower-tipped wand, and bloom that flower outshames;
And in the van of those sweet, happy faces
Marches the priest—whose sermon says, “Be merry!”—
The frank, good squire, and sage apothecary.

HOWITT'S *Forest Minstrel*.

Thus I wrote three-and-twenty years ago. That was then the literal transcript of existing things. That was exactly what I had seen in my native village, year after year, when I was a boy. It was still so there. But the great malady of England, the *sombres*, or the *blue-devils*, or call it what you will, which has infected us in the towns, has also spread into the country, into the remotest villages. There is no longer any talk of being “merry and wise.” Indeed, it would not be very wise to be merry on *boiled horse-beans* and *turnip-tops!* instead of the roast beef and plum-pudding of old England. It is impossible to keep Whitsuntide on boiled horse-beans and turnip-tops: and Mr. Sheridan told us, some time ago, that that was the best diet that his tenants' cottages could get. Others have told us that that was the case of thousands of other cottagers all over the country; for their houses are as bad as their diet. Merry and wise indeed! I was going to be merry on the present occasion, just out of old custom; but those boiled horse-beans and turnip-tops came across me, and put me out.

But the merry times *shall* come round again. A dozen things are at work for it. Bread grows cheap again; roast beef some day will be astonishing the cottage chimneys with fragrant fumes: labour shall grow fat and laugh. The landlords are beginning to see the real condition of the peasantry, and calling to each other to help to amend it. The Duke of Northumberland is rivalling the Duke of Bedford in building good and commodious houses for the labourers. There is a cry amongst the great and influential, that the cottage popu-

lation has been much too neglected, and must be made more comfortable. Let the landed proprietors give to each cottager a piece of land, at the same rent that they let to the farmers, and poverty will vanish from the rural districts like a morning mist. Wherever it has been tried this is the result. All things show, indeed, that the *sombres* has got to the worst, and there must be a mending. We are not a nation of cannibals yet; we are not going to eat up the poor man and his children; we are not even going to eat a loaf, when he cannot get a penny-roll; are not going to eat the turnips, and give him the tops; to put him on a par with our horses, and feed him on beans. No; the mischief is out—it is known; and if England be England—if the English are what they always have been—as good-hearted as they are stout-hearted, there is an end of the last of the dark ages. Again, banners shall float on the breezes of Whitsuntide—music shall sound from village to village—gay processions shall stream along from the green to the church, and from the church to the village inn.

And in the van of these sweet, happy faces
Shall march the priest, whose sermon says, "Be merry!"
The frank, good squire, and sage apothecary.

Of all the holidays of England none have been so pre-eminently the festival of good-fellowship as that of Whitsuntide. It was at this season that the ancient Church held its AGAPAI, or love-feasts. The love-feasts of the primitive Christians degenerated in England into what are called Whitsun-ales; so called from the churchwardens buying and laying in, from presents also, a large quantity of malt, which they brewed into beer, and sold out in the church or elsewhere. The profits, as well as those from Sunday games—there being no poor-rates—were given to the poor, for whom this was one mode of

provision, according to the Christian rule, that all festivities should be rendered innocent by alms. "In every parish," says Aubrey, "was a church-house, to which belonged spits, crocks, and other utensils for dressing provisions. Here the housekeepers met. The young people were there too; and had dancing, bowling, shooting at butts, &c.; the ancients sitting gravely by, and looking on."

The merriment degenerated into license: Puritanism put it down; but the love-feasts revived again, in the celebration of the annual meetings and processions of the friendly societies or clubs, and Whitsuntide became the greatest and most jocund of all village-festivals, excepting only the wake. These processions and jovialities I have described at length, as I have so often seen them, in the "Rural Life of England;" there we may contemplate them, and, carrying ourselves a few years back, see them as we saw them then.

But since then dark days have intervened, and snatched away many a fair attribute from this genuine holiday of the people. Easter was the great holiday of the Church; May-day was the holiday of the poets; but Whitsuntide was the holiday of the people. It was the *village*-festival; the village love-feast; the holiday when Nature and all her sunshine seemed to come out and rejoice with man. It was the festival when the old feasted, and sang their old songs; and the young danced, and were happy. But first came sage Prudence, and said the times were hard; it were better to give up all those ribands; they would furnish relief to a sick member for some months. And it *was* prudent, and it was done. The next year, Prudence came again, and brought Temperance with her, and said the times were still worse, and union workhouses were building, and all that asked parish relief must go there;

and, therefore, it was prudent to husband both health and the club-fund; so they advised them to give up their dinners and their ale. But without dinners, ale, or ribands, how were the poor souls to walk in procession, and "be merry?" Nobody was merry. The times were far from merry; wages were far from a merry rate; bread was dear, and had no mirth in it. The old parson was dead; and the new parson had got a new text, and it was, "He that provideth not for his family is worse than an infidel." This was the finishing blow; it knocked all the wind out of them. There was not a man amongst them that could provide for his family at 7s. a-week, and the corn-law price of bread; so the poor fellows set themselves down for a wretched set of infidels, and sneaked away from church. Ribands, feasts, processions, were in many places given up; and the glory of Whitsuntide was at an end.

But better times, we will venture to prophesy, are coming. With cheap food and education, the bond of strength amongst the poor, good times and gaiety, shall revive. Then, once more, let Whitsuntide be Merry Whitsuntide. Let the tent be spread on the village-green, where the temperance societies can join the *fête*; and let tea and coffee smoke upon the board, and old and young chat over all their news and their interests together. Let the young gather into groups and sing, and others "rise up and dance." Let the ball fly, and the race be run, and the manly game of cricket be played. Let there be talk for the old, active sports for the young, and fun for the very children. And as this is, and shall be more and more, an intelligent age, let a rural rostrum be erected, and from it let the eloquent advocates of peace, of temperance, of wise co-operation for the popular comfort, and for advance in all that is good and beautiful, there charm

the ears of the throng with eloquence, and stir their hearts with great and brotherly emotions. Let them recite what is planning, what is doing, what is growing and flourishing all the country—ay, all the world—over for the people.

Let the triumphs of knowledge over ignorance—of liberality over bigotry—of love over hate and heartburnings—be recounted. Let it be told what new schools are erected—what new allotments generous landlords have made amongst their labourers—what new co-operative colonies are founded, and how those flourish that are already existing—how the cause of temperance progresses—how the principles of peace diffuse themselves—what new knowledge and inventions promise new pleasures to mankind. Such will one day be the happy festival of Whitsuntide. It should still be the **VILLAGE FESTIVAL**; for summer then is in its early prime, and every soul that can should turn out, and enjoy the summer and the village *fête* together. The villagers should look with confidence for their friends and relatives from the towns to come and see with them how glorious the country then is. The feast should be spread for all, and paid for by all; as the slight cost at which such a feast may be afforded would be burdensome to no one. Friend would gladden the face of friend; heart would beat joyously to heart; every man, woman, and child, would feel that the balance of the world was once more restored; and instead of starving ignorance and tyrant suspicion, there would be the bright heaven smiling on the flowery earth, and every human creature wondering to find what a happy world this is after all.

Bird, that singest in thy wicker cage against the hot stone wall, I know thy heart and thy thoughts, where they are. Thy song is but thy dream of the sweet June valley whence thou wert stolen. Glittering waters, glittering

and running beneath the overhanging boughs, all glorious in their new leaves and blossoms; deep green grass, full of sweetest flowers; trees, where thy kinsman, thrush, sits in the verdant shadow, and improvises poems of delight: these are the things, this is the paradise, that swells thy heart almost to bursting.

Old man, hammering on thy last in that little cellar, with scarce room to turn thee round, I know what makes thee give such blows to that great old shoe. It is the scene that spreads itself through thy brain—spreads, opens wider, more palpably, glows, burns, and melts into thy imagination like an intoxication. It is the scene which lies before thee from that stile on the hill-top, where, fifty years ago, thy native village in its vale met thy eye for the last time. There are upland fields, straw-thatched cottages, half buried in blossoming orchards; there rises a smoke; there glances out a little window, there flutters a white handkerchief. It is far off in the north—it is fifty years since—yet, old man, thy heart faints in thee. Let the busy throng stream past thee, and not one regard thy humble person, far less thy humble labours; let them stir with careless foot, as they go by, the little row of thy dry and cobbled wares. Old man, there is still in thy soul a feeling that came from heaven, a dream of memory that is divine, a pang that might make a poet. Fifty years ago didst thou set out to seek thy fortune in London; it is this! But over thy native village the sun shines joyously, the fields are all flowers and verdure, the breeze goes whisking there with a living spirit, and that music announces that it is now, as then, merry Whitsuntide where thou wert born.

Old man, there is a train; let me send thee down once more to the feast—but no! thou art right! As with the old Indian chief, there runs no drop of thy blood in any living creature there. London is thy home, thy world;

this strait cell is thy stall and thy all. Here must thou hammer for the present, and muse on the past a little longer. Here only dost thou hold thy WAKE and thy WHITSUNTIDE.

Let us, however, take another view of our subject, and one that is within reach of thousands upon thousands of our readers.

GREEN BOUGHS FROM THE FOREST.

QUEEN ELIZABETH'S LODGE—THE TWO THOMPSONS.

The bells burst forth with a joyous peal, and remind us that it is Whitsuntide. Whitsuntide, not as in our last chapter, but Whitsuntide in London. At once a world of glad and beautiful things rushes over our hearts and our memories. Days of darkness and trial, scenes of fraud and faithlessness, a world of iron men and things, all that is sad and oppressive, disappear, and blue skies and green fields, and far-away woods and villages, where the merry bells, too, call to prayer and to social festivity the toiling race of rural simplicity, are present with us. We rise out of the foggy atmosphere of the care-paved city; we burst from the bondage of Mammon, and all his gins and traps, and machinery of lined books and tall stools, the perches of dolorous office-birds, and are away! once more free—once more men! Yes, in the land of pleasant memories the sun is still shining; the grass, and the trees, and the corn are green. The streams are flowing as harmoniously as ever—the lark and the thrush sing as joyously—and God and Nature receive us to their arms as from a dismal dream to the eternal reality of beauty and of peace. No!

Nature never did betray
The heart that loved her! 'tis her privilege,
Through all the years of this, our life, to lead

From joy to joy; for she can so inform
 The mind that is within us, so impress
 With quietness and beauty, and so feed
 With lofty thoughts, that neither evil tongues,
 Rash judgments, nor the sneers of selfish men,
 Nor greetings where no kindness is, nor all
 The dreary intercourse of common life
 Shall e'er prevail against us, or disturb
 Our cheerful faith that all that we behold
 Is full of blessings.

WORDSWORTH.

With the pealing bells, then, we break the spell of town dreariness, and are once more in the midst of the woods. We take our first flight into the near forest of Epping; we walk for miles in green glades, and beneath the green covert of the close boughs of the hornbeam trees; we pass on, and wonder where are the hundreds of people that in caravans have gaily driven from town to enjoy the forest freshness. We seek them in vain. We come upon the highway, and find them dancing in the heat and the dust of the yards of the public-houses, red as lobsters, and labouring harder, both men and women, than they have laboured at their shop or their household tasks for the last six months, while beer and tobacco constitute the heaven of the rest. Such are the ruralities of Londerers of a certain class. Could they not have been as rural at Copenhagen House, or the Shepherd's Bush? The schoolmaster must be surely *abroad!* Certainly he is not at home, as he should be. We plunge once more into the woods, and gladly lose the sound of the fiddle in the cry of the cuckoo and the murmur of the fresh boughs.

We are once more seated in a pleasant opening of the forest, at our pastoral dinner. Our friend, Henry C. Wright, sits, as he sate twelve months ago, amongst a group of children opposite to us, and tells them of the different scenery and creatures of the vast forests of America. After an hour spent more delightfully than in any

city, or in any king's palace, we arise and stroll into the brown solitude of High-Beech. There, bare ground, the scattered leaves of the last year, the old and noble beeches, carry us away to many a forest scene in the old and beloved Germany. We walk and dream—and miles of profoundly solitary woods, and old solitary Jäger houses, and primitive villages in deep remote glens, and antiquated inns in rarely visited regions, rise before us as we go. But the gipsy, who fain would tell your fortune, though you know too much of it already, and the laughter of parties of young people pic-nicing here and there, with lots of baskets, and some fiddles, and heaps of cloaks, and horses, still harnessed to gigs and chaises, hanging their heads in sleepy posture near, awake us from our pleasant reveries, and we take one long view from a hill-top of the far-spread country, and mount our own vehicles, and away.

THE OLD LODGE OF QUEEN ELIZABETH.

Away! but whither? To the Old Lodge of Queen Bess. Old Lodge, we salute thee for thy venerable antiquity; but we owe thee no respect as the one-time resort of the boasted virgin queen! No! we revere not the den of the assassin—we have no worship for the hand of the murderer, whether clad in royal, or in ragged apparel. Foh! The blood of a queen and of a cousin is on the hands of that wretched old woman! Let the interested courtier doff his hat, and fling his mantle in the way of that ancient hag and Jezebel—we owe more respect to hat and mantle, and to our own self, than thus to desecrate them. Foh! She thought Sir Amias Paulett a dainty fellow, because he would not take off her captive cousin privily at her command. She kept Sir Ralph Sadler as her royal commissioner of murder at Berwick. She imprisoned and

ruined poor secretary Davison, as her scapegoat, for the foul murder of her captive rival. Shall I lift my hand to do the royal tigress homage? The bloody stump of the printer who dared to print a pamphlet against her projected Spanish marriage, rises up and warns me. Get thee behind me, Satan! and all those who have painted thee as a noble mother in Israel.

Old Lodge! it is not that the gallant, but time-serving Raleigh, the wife-assassin Leicester, the man-spider Walsingham, or the grave and cold-blooded Burleigh, came thither with hawk and hound in that bad old woman's train; but for the days that have passed over thee in thy past solitude, leaving thee venerable to the eye, and welcome to the quiet-seeking heart, that I love thee; and that still more, from age to age, and from year to year, thou hast been the resort of the innocent and the happy for a few fleeting hours.

The hand of the past is impressed upon thee, and has given thee a character. It has invested thee with the poetry of nature. Storms roaring through the huge elms that stand near—old companions; fierce winters beating on thy steep gabled roof, and tinting thy framed walls; autumns, and springs, and hot-basking summers—a long series—come across the imagination, as we think of thee. The broad and easy oaken staircase, up which the heroine of the Armada farce and the Queen of Scots' tragedy is said to have ridden to her dining-room, the tapestried chamber, and the banqueting-hall, please me, but far more the ancient desolateness without and around.

The giant elms, in the hollow bole of one of which the old cat has made her abode with her kittens, and on the solid bole of another of which the keeper has impaled weazel, and stoat, and hawk; the old oaks standing in true forest sturdiness and scattered array; the old mere filled,

from end to end, with the tall clubrush, from which the hidden water-hen shouts short and sharp, ever and anon; and the swarming rabbits that cover the ground that they have cropped to the bare gravel—all please me. In the sunny garden, guarded by rude pales from the rabbit million, the bee hums, and the turnip runs wildly to seed, and the rudeness of all around reigns amongst clods, and wallflowers, and sparges.

Far around, beneath the forest tree, and appearing and disappearing amongst the forest thickets, are troops of marauders—boys bent on robbing birds'-nests, or capturing young rabbits—eager for prey in uninstructed ignorance, dreaming of no cruelty in the cruelties they commit. Oh! lovely Nature, what a woe is thine! Thammuz is slain; the gentle Balder is dead; those great types of the gentle and the merciful in the human soul, in all ages, have perished—their blood has dyed the running waters, and all Nature weeps for them. It weeps and still rejoices. The larks sing, and the nightingale; the voices of rook and jackdaw, and gushing streams, are full of glee; the young horse gallops in his gladness—the stream glitters happily, and the sky smiles a heavenly smile—truly, as the poet sings, “Nature is never melancholy!” And yet—out of the curse of man's fall comes a curse to thee. Out of the sin and crookedness of man's life, out of his towns and cities of misery, comes a blast of death across thee! How truly did that reflective old man say—“This forest is sorely infested with youth!”

But what is here? In a green glade is a small wagon, with two sleeping infants in it, and two rustic children dressed in holiday grotesquery standing by it, red and sunburnt, and strong and tired.

“What! are you here alone?”

“No—there are two gals and a bye; they are i’ the bushes a hunting nestis.”

“Have you come a good way?”

“Yes, we are.”

“Where’s your home then?”

“It be Chingford.”

“Are you tired?”

“Yes, we am.”

And so the reader has a specimen of the Chingford English.

THE TWO THOMPSONS.

But now a sudden glimpse of the waving birch-tree—a thought, and we are no longer in Epping Forest, but in Sherwood. We tread the storied haunts of Robin Hood. We muse on the great outlaw, and his magnanimous deeds. We are in the midst of romance, where the selfishness of the world is not lost from view, but where there is the most heart-satisfying poetical justice. The rich tremble, the poor walk the woodland scene; the bishop, spite of his assumed sanctity, is made to empty his money-bags, that the orphan and oppressed may live. There are men, and men of degree too, that in the very heart of the feudal times defy knights and kings, and live at large, strong in the popular favour, and the protecting arms of millions of green oaks. Thanks to you, old tramping ballad-mongers, who have left us a dream of pure and joyous life in the glades and the care-free depths of this old forest.

Where are they? Greater freebooters than Robin Hood have been here since. The oaks that stood in millions are felled to fill—what? The hunger of the poor? No, the pockets of placemen. They fell that they might build ships of war, but they built none; rangers and keepers,

and Heaven knows who, claimed their fees and perquisites, and the hard oaks were all swallowed up by the boa-constrictor of corruption; and the only thing that the country got was a void sandy waste in lieu of a fine old forest. There it is! The dark heather stretches for miles and almost scores of miles, where the green, gladsome oaks stood not half a century ago, and the wild deer ran free.

Yet here and there stands a solitary veteran of the ruined woods, and Birkland and Bilhaghe give us a grand old fragment, as a monument of what Sherwood once was. Ha! how delicious to tread this short, soft turf. To see the drooping boughs of the ancient, yet blithe birches; to scent their fragrance. What a peace! what woodland sounds of cuckoo, and woodpecker, and wryneck, and cushat! What a forest odour from the trodden turf! See! those old giants—those oaks of the days of King John and Clipstone Palace! How they lift up their black and shattered heads, that have felt the tempests of a thousand years! What a depth of heather! What a rich fragrance from those golden heaps of flaming gorse! Truly this is a sample of the past magnificence of Sherwood when it stretched from Nottingham to Whitby, in Yorkshire; and what individual oaks are these—huge in circumference as the tower of a village church!

Welcome, thou graceful and crimson foxglove—which in the days of Scarlet and Little John wert styled Folks-glove, or glove of the fairies—now corrupted, like a thousand other things. Welcome, thou beautiful fern! bearing in thy root the picture of an oak from deathless love to thy neighbour! Welcome, thou ruddy squirrel, whose ancestors sate above the heads of kings and outlaws as merry as thyself—the sadness of men has not yet reached *thee*! Welcome, all ye sights and sounds, the poetry of nature and of ages, that give us new heart as

we revisit you, and let us feel that there is yet gladness in the soul of solitude.

And there are men, too, in this old region. By the wayside, not far from the town of Mansfield—on a high and heathy ground, which gives a far-off view of the minster of Lincoln—you may behold a little clump of trees, encircled by a wall. That is called THOMPSON'S GRAVE. But who is this Thompson; and why lies he so far from his fellows? In ground unconsecrated; in the desert, or on the verge of it—for cultivation now approaches it? The poor man and his wants spread themselves, and corn and potatoes crowd upon Thompson's grave. But who is this Thompson; and why lies he here?

In the town of Mansfield there was a poor boy, and this poor boy became employed in a hosier's warehouse. From the warehouse his assiduity and probity sent him to the counting-house; from the counting-house, abroad. He travelled to carry stockings to the Asiatic and the people of the south. He sailed up the rivers of Persia, and saw the tulips growing wild on their banks, with many a lily and flower of our proudest gardens. He travelled in Spain and Portugal, and was in Lisbon when the great earthquake shook his house over his head. He fled. The streets reeled; the houses fell; church towers dashed down in thunder across his path. There were flying crowds, shrieks, and dust, and darkness. But he fled on. The farther—the more misery. Crowds filled the fields when he reached them—naked, half-naked, terrified, starving, and looking in vain for a refuge. He fled across the hills—and gazed. The whole huge city rocked and staggered below. There were clouds of dust—columns of flame—the thunder of down-crashing buildings—the wild cries of men. He suffered amid ten thousand suffering outcasts.

At length, the tumult ceased; the earth became stable. With other ruined and curious men he climbed over the heaps of desolation in quest of what once was his home, and the depository of his property. His servant was nowhere to be seen: Thompson felt that he must certainly have been killed. After many days' quest, and many uncertainties, he found the spot where his house had stood; it was a heap of rubbish. His servant and merchandise lay beneath it. He had money enough, or credit enough, to set to work men to clear away some of the fallen materials, and to explore whether any amount of property were recoverable. What is that sound? A subterranean, or subruinan, voice? The workmen stop, and are ready to fly with fear. Thompson exhorts them, and they work on. But again that voice! No *human* creature can be living there! The labourers again turn to fly. They are a poor, ignorant, and superstitious crew; but Thompson's commands, and Thompson's gold, arrest them. They work on, and out walks Thompson's living servant—still in the body, though a body not much more substantial than a ghost. All cry, "How have you managed to live?"

"I fled to the cellar. I have sipped the wine; but now I want bread, meat, everything!" and the living skeleton walked staggering on, and looked voraciously for shops and loaves—and saw only brickbats and ruins.

Thompson recovered his goods, and retreated as soon as possible to his native land. Here, in his native town, the memory of the earthquake still haunted him. He used almost daily to hasten out of the place, and up the forest hill, where he imagined that he saw Lisbon reeling—tottering—churches falling—and men flying. But he saw only the red tiles of some thousand peaceful houses, and

the twirling of a dozen windmill sails. Here he chose his burial-ground; walled it, and planted it, and left special directions for his burial. The grave should be deep, and the spades of resurrection-men disappointed by repeated layers of straw, not easy to dig through. In the churchyard of Mansfield, meantime, he found the grave of his parents, and honoured it with an inclosure of iron palisades.

He died. How? Not in travel—not in sailing over the ocean, nor up tulip-margined rivers of Persia or Arabia Felix; nor yet in an earthquake—but in the dream of one. One night he was heard crying, in a voice of horror, “There! there!—fly! fly!—the town shakes!—the house falls!—Ha! the earth opens!—away!” Then the voice ceased; but in the morning it was found that he had rolled out of bed, lodged between the bedstead and the wall, and there, like a sandbag wedged in a windy crevice, he was—dead!

There is, therefore, a dead Thompson in Sherwood Forest, where no clergyman laid him, and yet he sleeps; and there is also a living Thompson.

In the village of Edwinstowe, on the very verge of the beautiful old Birkland, there stands a painter’s house. In his little parlour, you find books, and water-colour paintings on the walls, which show that the painter has read and looked about him in the world. And yet he is but a house-painter, who owes his establishment here to his love of nature rather than to his love of art. In the neighbouring Dukery, some one of the wealthy wanted a piece of oak-painting done; but he was dissatisfied with the style in which painters now paint oak; a style very splendid, but as much resembling genuine oak as a frying-pan resembles the moon. Christopher Thompson deter-

mined to try *his* hand; and for this purpose he did not put himself to school to some great master of the art, who had copied the copy of a hundred consecutive copies of a piece of oak, till the thing produced was very fine, but like no wood that ever grew or ever will grow. Christopher Thompson went to nature. He got a piece of well-figured, real oak, well planed and polished, and copied it precisely. When the different specimens of the different painters were presented to the aforesaid party, he found only one specimen at all like oak, and that was Thompson's. The whole crowd of master house-painters were exasperated and amazed. Such a fellow preferred to them! No; they were wrong—it was nature that was preferred.

Christopher Thompson was a self-taught painter. He had been tossed about the world in a variety of characters—errand-boy, brickmakers' boy, potter, shipwright, sailor, sawyer, strolling player; and here he finally settled down as painter, and, having achieved a trade, he turned author, and wrote his life. That life—*The Autobiography of an Artisan*—is one of the best-written and most interesting books of its class that we ever read. It is full of the difficulties of a poor man's life, and of the resolute spirit that conquers them. It is, moreover, full of a desire to enlighten, elevate, and in every way better the condition of his fellow-men. Christopher Thompson is not satisfied to have made his own way; he is anxious to pave the way for the whole struggling population. He is a zealous politician, and advocate of the Odd-Fellow system, as calculated to link men together and give them power, while it gives them a stimulus to social improvement. He has laboured to diffuse a love of reading, and to establish mechanics' libraries in neglected and obscure places.

Behold the Thompson of Edwinstowe. Time, in eight-and-forty years, has whitened his hair, though it has left the colour of health on his cheek, and the fire of intelligence in his eye. With a well-built frame and figure, and a comely countenance, there is a buoyancy of step, and an energy of manner about him, that agree with what he has written of his life and aspirations. Such are the men that England is now, ever and anon, in every nook and corner of the island, producing. She produces them because they are needed. They are the awakeners who are to stir up the sluggish to what the time demands of them.

The two Thompsons of Sherwood are types of their ages. He of the grave—lies solitary and apart from his race. He lived to earn money—his thought was for himself—and there he sleeps, alone in his glory—such as it is. He was no worse, nay, he was better than many of his contemporaries. He had no lack of benevolence; but trade and the spirit of his age—cold and unsympathetic—absorbed him. He was content to lie alone in the desert, amid the heath “that knows not when good cometh,” and where the lonely raven perches on the blasted tree.

The living Thompson is, too, the man of his age; for it is an age of awakening enterprise, of wider views, of stronger sympathies. He lives and works, not for himself alone. His motto is, Progress; and while the forest whispers to him of the past, books and his own heart commune with him of the future. Such men belong to both. When the present becomes the past, their work will survive them; and their tomb will not be a desert, but the grateful memories of improved men. May they spring up in every hamlet, and carry knowledge and refinement to every cottage fireside!

But we came forth to gather green boughs from the

forest. Here they are! Could we pluck down fairer ones? Night hastens; the holiday is over; but we have found Nature lovely and glad as ever; and men, who in loving her, feel that they must love men still more. These are the green boughs of the forest—they are full of beauty and hope.

THE YOUNG BIRD OF PASSAGE.

Oh, bird! oh, little bird,
Blithe in thy native spot—
This summer sky expands
Far over other lands,
But them thou knowest not.

Here hast thou woke to life;
Here only life hast known.
Mid flowers and songs, green grass
And streams, that glittering pass,
Thy merry hours have flown.

And if to thee be given
The mystery of thought,
Here dost thou hope to dwell
With things beloved so well,
That none beside are sought.

But quickly there will dawn
Within thee strange desires;
Strange dreams of other skies,
Strange, far-off melodies—
The sound of Indian choirs.

And thy first loves and joys
Hushed, spell-bound in thy heart—
From woodland, field, and stream,
Like pleasures of a dream,
Shall they and thou depart.

Called, urged, thou know'st not how,
Upward thy soul shall spring,
Daring the ocean flood,
Daring heaven's amplitude,
With inexperienced wing.

Oh, bird! oh, little bird,
Strange as thy lot may be,
Yet, in thy young delight,
Yet, in thy coming flight,
Thou art a type of me.

For now, even now, I feel,
Here, where my light first shone,
Some unseen world's control,
Strong in my inmost soul,
And bidding me begone.

Voices of power are calling;
Sounds come from other spheres;
Visions float through my breast,
And thoughts that will not rest
But in the unreached years.

Vainly would earth detain me,
Her summer spell is o'er;
Here have I dwelt in glee,
But soon I pass like thee,
And I return no more.



JULY.

JULY is the manhood of the year. It stands strong, full-grown, glowing and beautiful, between the seasons of growth and decline. It is now perfect summer. The trees are in full foliage, and their delicate leaves have darkened into a rich sobriety. Flowers of the most brilliant kinds are scattered over mead and mountain, over heath and glen. All is bright and hot: thunder occasionally announces the season of sultriness; insects hum around, and the heart of man reposes on the genial scene, neither looking backward nor forward. Avaunt Winter! let us not dream that thou canst ever return. Hide thee, beloved Spring! awake no tender remembrances!

Let us go forth into field and forest—God and Nature, poetry and our fellow-men, call us. The songs of birds grow faint; the nightingale is hushed; the cuckoo has departed; the blackbird and the thrush now rarely bid us a musical and heartsome welcome to their haunts; the rose fades on the wayside bough; the corn already grows pale for harvest; but then, what thousands of happy and beautiful things surround us! Are not the elder-flower, and the corn-poppy, and the viper's bugloss of richest azure, delightful in the hedge, and on the sandy heath?

I lately trod, for a few stolen hours,
 One of our former haunts, the forest waste
 Of merry Sherwood. O'er its heathy slopes,
 And down its vales, russet and dark, the sun
 Shed his noon glow, as in those pleasant times -
 When through them far we strayed, or sate us down
 In the deep joy of poetry and peace.
 Harlow Wood, skirted with quivering birch,
 Slumbered in silence on the far-off hill;
 The sandy fields were in their summer robes;
 Green blady corn with scarlet poppies thick,
 And bugloss flaunting its cerulean plumes.
 The grasshopper was busy near my couch;
 The flock sent up at times a lonely bleat,
 And o'er my head the clouds basked solemnly
 Amid the blue depths of the glowing sky,
 As many a bright day we had witnessed them.
 It was a scene barren and desolate
 As common eye might deem, but into mine
 It called a warm gush of delicious tears.

Are not men, and women, and troops of glad children now roaming on the margin of refreshing seas, through the glens of beautiful hills, over the fairest spots of foreign lands? Is it not the holiday of nature, enjoyed by myriads of holiday hearts, which have torn themselves for a season from the couch of that worst slavery—life without a task and without an aim; from shops and factories, and the twelvemonth hardness of counting-house stools?

Ah! what a luxury is a bank; what a cushion is a bed

of moss or heather on a moorland; what a *delicium* is a plunge into sea or river after the dryness of the stool and the desk through a long monotonous year! Enjoy it, good souls—enjoy it. Lay in sunshine for a long future amid dusky alleys; lay in flowers for remembrance, where not even a weed will grow amid stony pavements and stony hearts; lay in breezes and waves that may fan your parched souls in the sandy desert of merchantdom; lie on banks, and think no more of bankers; lean on hedges, and not on ledgers; open daisies instead of day-books; have no care about stocks, but such as you can stick in your button-hole; or of prices-current, but such as you can learn of the fruit-woman. Leave railway scrip for a railway trip; leave steam-factories, and get upon steam-boats. Nature is now above par, but the exchange is only the more in your favour; be for one-heaven-of-a-month men, and not merchants; be grand capitalists in the wealth of a whole universe.

Don't you scent the hay? Don't you hear the scythes ringing? Don't you hear laughter? Ah! this weather carries me back through far years, and makes me hear laughter that now can be only heard in heaven.

My awakened heart

Throbs with revived emotions. I behold
A quiet mansion, and a blessed group,
That on its ample, hospitable hearth,
Basked in the smile of a divine old man—
Ay—old in years, but keeping in his heart
A more than childhood of unblunted feelings,
Simplicity and love. Amid those friends
A tall and lovely damsel raised a song,
Whose tones still come upon my ear at times
With a bewildering sweetness. But away
We rambled now afar; for I was one
Of those few happy ones. Afar we went,
With merry hearts, and with rejoicing limbs,
A gay young band as ever trod the earth
In sunshine and delight. Anon we came
Where, solemn in the majesty of years,

Two ancient halls arose. One ruinate,—
 The other its unscathed battlements
 Lifting into the high and silent air
 With an appalling grace. We ran, we climbed,
 Exploring every nook. The desolation
 Of the once glowing hearth; the broken stairs,
 Threatening at intervals to plunge us down
 To the dark depths below; the roofless rooms,
 Where waved the sycamore, and hung the fern
 From the denuded walls; the banquet-hall,
 Where frown those giants twain,
 Huge Gog and Magog; while above their heads
 The hostile angel wields the flickering brand.
 Some sate them down on the green turf below,
 Where, at the base of the hoar, crumbling walls,
 Henbane, and nightshade, and the pellitory
 Sprang thick and flourished in their favourite haunts.
 Some busily aloft carved with their knives,
 Upon the leaden roofs in footmarks small,
 Initials of loved names. But speedily,
 To our resounding knock, opened the doors
 Of the still perfect mansion; and we swept
 Musingly on through a long gallery, hung
 With the recorded forms of those who once
 Had moved and breathed within it—those whose deeds
 Were famous in their time; and female faces,
 Haunting the gazer with the silent spell
 Of their surpassing beauty. Up long flights
 Of slow-ascending stairs, through solemn halls,
 Whose tapestried roof glowed with the stories of old
 Of Grecian fable, we passed on and paused,
 Paused with a reverend joy amid the worn
 And faded splendour of the chapel dim;
 Its statues, and its holy books, that lay
 Scattered about in antique elegance,
 As they had lain there since laid down by hands
 Long mouldered into dust; and cushions rich
 With gold and crimson tissue, where the great,
 The high born, and the beautiful knelt down
 In worship of the Eternal Majesty.

Thence we ascended to a lofty tower,
 Hung with the relics of disused arms,
 Hauberks and helmets crumbling fast away
 In rust; huge lances, huge buff-coats,
 And interwoven mail. And at this hour
 Still do I see a slight and graceful girl,
 Laughing, heave up a falchion from the floor—
 Point at my breast—then shudder and turn pale,
 Even at the thought of blood that it had shed.

But coming back to the present. Don't you see shapes in sunny fields fit for painters, fit for poets, fit for any man, with a pair of eyes and a heart, to delight in? They are the Arcadians of England—haymakers, who with such a sky over our heads, and not a workhouse roof—with such beauty and warmth around them, forget that they are poor, and some weeks ago were miserable, and are once more happy English peasants, earning their twelve and fifteen shillings a-week. God bless them! and He does bless them. What a heaven expands over them! what a paradise lies around them! what a goodness there is in once more meeting in the ancient fields with their friends in comfort, and with work and wages! With sunshine, warmth, and pure water, and nothing to pay for them—as they would if their fellow-men had to deal them out to them. God gives—man sells—often that which is not his own, but God's!

Ye thousands, and ye tens of thousands, that still are imprisoned in large towns: that know no summer, except by its heat, and the dust which it whirls into your faces, and your houses, and your food; in the flies and wasps that beset the poor fragment of your loaf, and the bit of sugar in the bottom of your basin; in withered cabbages on huckster's stalls, and in the swarms of dirty children enabled to dispense pretty well with clothes, and to make dust-mills under old-iron shop windows. Ye poor Pariahs of what is called civilised life—but which is most uncivil to you—how much better were it for you now to be gipsies, than poor city cockroaches, swarming and sweltering in your dingy dens and cellars! Poor souls! God bless you too, and grant that the modern mania of crowding into heaps of dirty humanity may give way to a thirst of being amid quiet villages and green fields. That the land-coral insects may grow weary of covering the earth, in

certain enchanted spots, with such immense incrustations of baked clay, and may turn into cottagers, hamleteers, and field roamers. That an equal distribution of labour and profits may distribute you over the surface of the country, in such proportions, and at such distances, that you may know what a blade of grass is, or see a tree in its real freshness, and not a ramification of soot.

The spirit is awakening, and these times will come. The Board of Health will discover that the most health is to be found in the country after all. Manufacturers will find that mills can work quite as well on country rivers as on town sinks; and workmen, that they may spend their evenings in gardens and in glades far more delightfully than in gin-shops and beer-shops. What is that we already hear of? An association for building suburban villas for workmen, who are to pass to their town labour and back in cheap trains. Farewell then Bethnal-green, Spitalfields, and Whitechapel! Greener greens and sweeter fields, and whiter chapels, shining out on the tops of pleasant hills, throw you into the shade. Ah! then, what glorious Julys will be there! Morning and evening, and on long Sundays and holidays, the workmen will see the face of nature, which is but the living mask of God, through which He gazes on us with benignant eyes; and all day long will their wives and children bask "in the great eye of heaven."

But stop—let us see, not what is to come, but what is come. What a flower-blaze burns in our gardens! Jasmynes, speedwells, irises, campanulas, lychnises, pinks, carnations, lilies, heaths, rose-campions, evening primroses, hydrangeas, musk-roses, larkspurs, clematis, escholtzias, sweet peas, lupines, vetches, hawkweeds, amaranths, globe-thistles, coreopses, lavateras, trumpet and monkey flowers; the catalogue is endless—the brilliancy of their various

hues is delectable. And over every field and heath it is the same. The heather bursts into its crimson beauty on the moorland hills; the anglers by solitary rivers gaze on flowers of wondrous beauty, that, like themselves, dip their lines and floats into the dreamy waters.

But to the man who has passed through the heats and thunder-storms of life, such spots are dangerous. They are apt to inspire

MIDSUMMER MUSINGS.

It is the summer of the fleeting year—
On the brown sward the flowers are faint and few:
All songs are hushed, and but the clear halloo
And 'larum of the bird-boy reach the ear;
Through the warm air floats forth the lime's perfume,
And wayside boughs have lost the rose's bloom.

The corn is golden on a thousand slopes,
All crisply rustling to the living breeze;
And mid the billowy sound of summer trees
I wander, pondering on departed hopes;
Nor hopes alone, but pleasant lives departed,—
I walk alone, for I am lonely-hearted.

What of those blest affections have I found,
Which life should ripen like its summer corn?
Which hath not from my feeble grasp been torn,
Of all the love with which young life was crowned?
Hearts, which if I would seek, I know not where
To find their graves—yet have they long been there.

These fell away like leaves when life was new,
Smitten with that blight which to the fairest clings;
And, though I have lived on through many springs,
No greenness follows where those first buds grew;
Still glows the heart, but glows without the power
To give or gain the freshness of that hour.

Yet why should I be sad?—for Nature spreads
Her wealth before me daily; from her heart
Doth joys, proud thoughts, sweet sympathies impart,
Which I drink in like one who nothing dreads;
Fearless that hers like man's weak faith should fall,
Her face should darken, or *her* pleasures pall.

Yet, why should I be sad?—for I have found
One true companion—one dear soul is mine,
Whose converse still doth soothe, amuse, refine;
And on my hearth there is a cheerful sound
Of lightsome feet, and tones that in my ears
Ring like the hopes and joys of other years.

Then, though the false depart, the weak descend,
Though lights which seemed immortal ceased to burn,
Though it be mine with bitter tears to mourn
Life's sorest sight—life's work without its end,—
Firm is my faith in truth and virtue's lot,
Though thousands feign, and myriads feel them not.

BATHING.

At this time of the year most people become sensible of the luxury of bathing, and it is one of the best signs of the times that, in large cities, the facilities for the indulgence of healthful enjoyment are every day becoming greater. Till within these few years, no people were so ill-provided with baths as the English. Our greater intercourse with the continent has produced a great and most auspicious change in this respect. Few prosperous families find their house complete without the means of domestic bathing. In our large cities baths and washhouses are becoming numerous and admirably constructed for economy and comfort. In the best class of public baths in London, such as those in St. Martin's Fields, you can command a warm bath of the first class with all accommodations, approaching in their character even to elegance, for sixpence; and a cold bath for threepence. Of the second class, where all is neat and clean, a warm bath for threepence, a cold bath for three-halfpence. No city in the world can now furnish better economical means for this delightful recreation. It is gratifying to find that the population is quite prepared to avail itself of these advantages, and that hundreds of thousands continually use the London baths; so much so, that the speculation is a most

profitable one. The taste for bathing is rapidly spreading throughout the kingdom, and new baths and washhouses are erecting in a great number of towns.

But this satisfactory state of things has not yet reached the country. There the constant and rapid progress of cultivation, population, and the consequent advance in the value of property, is fast cutting off the old facilities for bathing. So far from ladies now finding secure retreats in woods and hidden places where they might bathe, as Thomson describes the ladies of his time doing, men can now rarely find an open river or sheet of water where they can bathe in privacy, and without offence to public feeling and private claims. Who has not seen the opportunities for such bathing constantly receding for years before the march of population and of proprietary assumption? Here a town has extended itself; there waterworks have sprung up; here a fishery has developed itself; there land has been enclosed; here woods have been shut up, and there farmers have grown jealous of their grass.

This is a matter which requires looking to. The pleasures of summer are thus seriously menaced with curtailment. While the towns are acquiring new facilities for bathing, the country is fast losing its old privileges. When residing near the river Lea, at Clapton, we saw this progressive obstruction to river bathing displaying itself in a striking manner. For sixty years it had been the custom to bathe in the canal, and in the river for generations. But the proprietors of the canal drove the bathers thence on the plea that they injured the banks; and the renter of the fishery in the river, on the plea that they disturbed the fish. Where is this to end? The people are driven from stream to stream, and will at last, as they do in many neighbourhoods already, find themselves without a single yard of water into which they can plunge in the hottest

weather. Monopoly after monopoly pursues them. Those streams which God has caused to flow through the country freely for the good of all, are shut up by acts of Parliament. Canal companies, water companies, traders in fisheries; are empowered to expel every one from the simple natural, and necessary enjoyment of their waters.

Here is a great and growing want; an inconvenience which demands the thought and remedy which belong to an age profoundly engaged in sanitary measures. Above all things, the supply of pure water for domestic use is to be considered, but next to that there should be as carefully maintained the amplest opportunities for bathing. May we not avail ourselves in this case of the plans of the continent? There, and especially in Germany, baths of framed timber, covered with canvas, are set up each spring in almost all rivers. These enclose a sufficient space for a swimming bath in the centre, and private ones, and dressing rooms, round. They are very cheap, and are erected and taken away again with very little trouble. They are greatly resorted to, and afford all the pleasures and advantages of river bathing, with the maintenance of the completest public decorum. Let us hope that in the progress of improvement, such baths in all parts of the country may become common. Nothing could add more to the health of the rural population, and to the pleasures of summer.

SINGULAR PROCEEDINGS OF THE SAND-WASP.

In all my observations of the habits of living things, I have never seen anything more curious than the doings of one species of these ammophilæ—lovers of sand. I have watched them day after day, and hour after hour, in my garden, and also on the sandy banks on the wastes about Esher, in Surrey, and always with unabated wonder

They are about an inch long, with orange-coloured bodies, and black heads and wings. They are slender, and most active. You see them on the warm borders of your garden, or on warm, dry banks, in summer, when the sun shines hotly. They are incessantly and most actively hunting about. They are in pursuit of a particular grey spider with a large abdomen. For these they pursue their chase with a fiery quickness and avidity. The spiders are on the watch to seize flies; but here we have the tables turned, and these are flies on the watch to discover and kill the spiders. These singular insects seem all velocity and fire. They come flying at a most rapid rate, light down on the dry soil, and commence an active search. The spiders lie under the leaves of plants, and in little dens under the dry little clods. Into all these places the sand-wasp pops his head. He bustles along here and there, flirting his wings, and his whole body all life and fire. And now he moves off to a distance, hunts about there, then back to his first place, beats the old ground carefully over, as a pointer beats a field. He searches carefully round every little knob of earth, and pops his head into every crevice. Ever and anon, he crouches close amongst the little clods as a tiger would crouch for his prey. He seems to be listening, or smelling down into the earth, as if to discover his prey by every sense which he possesses. He goes round every stalk, and descends into every hollow about them. When he finds the spider, he despatches him in a moment, and seizing him by the centre of his chest, commences dragging him off backwards.

He conveys his prey to a place of safety. Frequently he carries it up some inches into a plant, and lodges it amongst the green leaves. Seeing him do this, I poked his spider down with a stick after he had left it; but he

speedily returned, and finding it fallen down, he immediately carried it up again to the same place.

Having thus secured his spider, he selects a particular spot of earth, the most sunny and warm, and begins to dig a pit. He works with all his might, digging up the earth with his formidable mandibles, and throwing it out with his feet, as a dog throws out the earth when scratching after a rabbit. Every few seconds he ascends, tail first, out of his hole, clears away the earth about its mouth with his legs, and spreads it to a distance on the surface. When he has dug the hole, perhaps two inches deep, he comes forth eagerly, goes off for his spider, drags it down from its lodgment, and brings it to the mouth of his hole. He now lets himself down the hole, tail first, and then, putting forth his head, takes the spider, and turns it into the most suitable position for dragging it in.

It must be observed that this hole is made carefully of only about the width of his body, and therefore the spider cannot be got into it except lengthwise, and then by stout pulling. Well, he turns it lengthwise, and seizing it, commences dragging it in. At first you would imagine this impossible; but the sand-wasp is strong, and the body of the spider is pliable. You soon see it disappear. Down into the cylindrical hole it goes, and anon you perceive the sand-wasp pushing up its black head beside it; and having made his way out, he again sets to work, and pushes the spider with all his force to the bottom of the den.

And what is all this for? Is the spider laid up in his larder for himself? No; it is food for his children. It is their birthplace and their supply of provision while they are in the larva state.

We have been all along calling this creature he, for it has

a most masculine look; but it is in reality a she; it is the female sand-wasp, and all this preparation is for the purpose of laying her eggs. For this she has sought and killed the spider, and buried it here. She has done it all wittingly. She has chosen one particular spider, and that only, for that is the one peculiarly adapted to nourish her young.

So here it is safely stored away in her den; and she now descends, tail first, and piercing the pulpy abdomen of the spider, she deposits her egg or eggs. That being done, she carefully begins filling in the hole with earth. She rakes it up with her legs and mandibles, and fills in the hole, every now and then turning round and going backwards into the hole to stamp down the earth with her feet, and to ram it down with her body as a rammer. When the hole is filled, it is curious to observe with what care she levels the surface, and removes the surrounding lumps of earth, laying some first over the tomb of the spider, and others about, so as to make that place look as much as possible like the surface all round. And before she has done with it—and she works often for ten minutes at this levelling and disguising before she is perfectly satisfied—she makes the place so exactly like all the rest of the surface, that it will require good eyes and close observation to recognise it.

She has now done her part, and Nature must do the rest. She has deposited her eggs in the body of the spider, and laid that body in the earth in the most sunny spot she can find. She has laid it so near the surface that the sun will act on it powerfully, yet deep enough to conceal it from view. She has, with great art and anxiety, destroyed all traces of the hole, and the effect will soon commence. The heat of the sun will hatch the egg. The larva, or young grub of the sand-wasp, will become alive,

and begin to feed on the pulpy body of the spider in which it is enveloped. This food will suffice it till it is ready to emerge to daylight, and pass through the different stages of its existence. Like the ostrich, the sand-wasp thus leaves her egg in the sand till the sun hatches it, and having once buried it, most probably never knows herself where it is deposited. It is left to Nature and Providence.

BRINGING HOME.

The bright and beautiful season of summer, by calling us abroad, introduces us to new scenes, and often to new circumstances. Wandering through far off fields and villages, under the influence of the time, it has been my lot to witness some singular passages of human life, which I have for that reason, here arranged under one head.

To every true Englishman, HOME is a magic sound; every true English author stamps upon his page an intense feeling of its sacred and affectionate power. The thousand incidents, interests, and relationships that spring thence, and wrap our mortal life in all its varieties of peace, or happiness, or misery, have been depicted by the strongest and the feeblest pens with an equal feeling of pleasure, though with far different degrees of vigour. To my mind, no circumstances connected with home are more attractive and affecting than the bringing thither individuals in the various stages of existence, under the various aspects of fortune. I have seen the infant, who, to use a Hibernianism, was born from home, brought thither. I have seen the eager groups of servants—of brothers and sisters, springing forth from the domestic door, as the sound of the carriage approached, in which the little stranger and its parents were coming. I have heard the exclamations

of delight, of loving welcome—seen the earnest looks and gestures of curious joy—the crowding round to gaze on the little, unknown face—the snatching up of the long-desired prize—the hurrying altogether of the happy family into that abode which, henceforth, is the home of all.

Again, I have seen the boy come bounding in from his half-year's absence at school, all life, and health, and pleasure; seen the glad embraces, and shaking of hands; heard the cries of surprise at his growth, his change, his improvement. I have seen, too, the gentle, timid girl return under the same circumstances; seen the mother's kisses, her tears, her proud smiles; seen the former play-mate waiting to welcome her, and beheld what a change a little time had made in those two young creatures—how the gay familiarity of the days ere they parted was gone—how they looked at each other, and felt strange; and evidently wondered, in their own minds, at the alteration in each other—so grown, so different, so unlike the beings of each other's memory—till they became shy and silent.

I have seen the tall youth coming from abroad, from his first field, perhaps—a boy when he went—now a man, with a lofty, dashing figure, a manly face, a manly voice; and so grown out of his former self, that it required some time and intercourse to discover, in the depths of his heart and nature, the beloved youth that he went away.

I have seen such a youth come home, not to the joy and triumph of his family, but—to die. I have stood by the graves of the companions of my youth, who have dispersed themselves in the world, and have not come back even to die, but have been borne to their native scenes on the bier, that their ashes might mingle with the ashes of their kindred.

Melancholy home-bringings are these! but they show the mighty power which resides in that sacred spot. The

prodigal in his misery—the conqueror on his bed of victory—the poet in the glorious sunset of his mortal course—all cry, “Take me home, that I may die! or, if that may not be, take me home, that I may sleep with my fathers!” Though they should have traversed the world—though they should have sojourned long and contentedly in many nations—so that in other peoples, other manners, other loves, they may have forgotten for years their fatherland—yet, when the last hour comes, the soul arises in its agony, and stretches itself towards the home of its youth, and in the last gushing passion of love, would fain, fain fly thither, ere it quits the earth for ever.

It is but a few years ago that I stood by the grave of one of the greatest poets, and one of the most extraordinary men of this or any age. It was in a little, miserable village. And he had gone and dwelt in the lands of old renown—in the lands of present and perpetual beauty; he had walked with the mightiest, the wisest, and the most illustrious of the earth; and not only the multitude, but *they* had looked upon him with wonder and admiration. He had desired pleasure, and reaped it, down to the coarse and jagged stubble of pain and barrenness; he had thirsted for renown, and had won it in its fulness; he had rejoiced to sail on wide seas, had sate amid the eternal and most magnificent mountains, and gathered up thoughts of everlasting grandeur. All that was lovely in nature and in man he had seen and partaken, without scruple, and without stint; he had even turned in scorn from his native land and sworn that his bones should never lie in its bosom. But death stood before him, and his heart melted, and acknowledged its allegiance to the mighty power of nature—to the irresistible force of early ties. He sent messages of love to those whom he had severed from, and of conciliation to those with whom he had warred in

fiercest passion; and here, from all his wanderings, all his speculations, and all his glory,—to this little, obscure, and unattractive nook of earth—he was brought! Not a spot of all those distant and beautiful ones might defraud this of its rightful due; nature was more powerful than time, or space, or passion, or fame; dust must mingle with its kindred dust.

These things I have seen; these every one sees, and almost every day; but it was my lot lately to notice one or two incidents, arising out of this strong law of nature, that deserve a more particular attention.

THE PEASANT GENERAL.

I was paying a rather long visit in one of the midland counties, and was in the habit of strolling far in the mornings from the habitation of my friend into the neighbouring fields, forests, and hamlets. As I one day entered a village, I found all the inhabitants unoccupied with their ordinary labours, dressed in their best, and old and young collected in groups in the street. I immediately imagined that it was the wake; but, observing no stalls of toys or sweetmeats, no shows or signs of wake amusements, I was at a loss to account for the cause of this holiday aspect of things. The first human creatures that I approached were some boys; and I asked them what particular cause of holiday-making they had.

“Oh!” said they, “don’t you know? The general is coming!”—“The general!” I replied. “What general?”—“What general!” said the lad who before had answered me, with an air of wonder. “The general, to be sure! Why, Tom,” said he, turning, with a laugh, to the boy who stood next him, “he does not know the general!”

A woman, leaving her company, came up, and relieved

both the boys and myself from our dilemma. "General Royston," said she, "is coming to-day, after a twenty-years' absence. Do you see that old cottage, about which so many people are collected? There live his father and mother."

"His father and mother!" I replied; "a general's father and mother live in that poor cottage! You surprise me as much as my question surprised the boys."

"Yes, sir," said the woman; "it is not every day that such things happen; but this is General Royston's native village. In that house he was born, as poor a boy as any in the place; but he was a clever, active lad, and the clergyman took notice of him; took him into his service, and gave him as much learning as if he had been his own son. When he was grown up, he went as servant to the clergyman's son, who was an officer, to the Indies. There the young gentleman died; but before he died, knowing that he could not live, and being very fond of Royston, who had served him very diligently, and waited on him in his illness, he made over his commission to him. He continued many years in the Indies, and distinguished himself greatly in the wars. He was reckoned one of the cleverest and boldest men in the army; and though at first his brother officers looked very shy at him, and some even insulted him, on account of his birth, yet, in spite of all, he rose by degrees to the rank of major. Many presents, and much money, he sent to his parents from time to time; but at the moment that he returned to England, the army was going to Spain, and he was ordered to accompany it—and there he went, almost without setting foot on his native shores. There he fought under Wellington, and followed him in all his victories in Spain, and thence into France, and was in the great battle of Waterloo. When the war was over, he was sent into Canada; and never till this day has he

been able to set his face towards his native place;—and now he is coming. He has sent many times, and wanted his parents to go into a better house, but they never would. They said, in that they had lived almost all their lives, and there they would die. He himself has bought the hall; and a gentleman from London has been here and had it repaired, and the grounds newly laid out, and all, both inside and out, made very grand. And to-day there is to be a great dinner on the lawn: and the general, and his father and mother, and the old clergyman, who is still alive, and everybody in the village, are to be there.”

As the woman told her story, a crowd of her neighbours had got round me; and as she ceased, began eagerly to tell so many excellent things of this general, without one trace of that envy which such unusual elevations commonly produce, that I declared I must stay and see the arrival of this extraordinary man. I walked down the village, and drew near the cottage of his parents. There I beheld an old man in the dress of a rustic, and propped on two sticks, eagerly looking down the lane, up which the general was to come; while the old woman, in a state of fidgetty excitement, continually appeared at the door, looked out, and disappeared again. I took my seat under a large sycamore-tree on the green, and awaited the event. Presently, I saw the heads of all stretched forward, and their eyes fixed on an eminence at some distance opposite. Presently, there was a cry, “He is coming!” and all ran with one accord down the lane. I followed them with my eyes, and soon discerned a dense crowd hurrying up towards the village—a cloud of dust hovering above them as they came. As they drew near, repeated hurrahs announced their triumphal procession, and I soon discerned a carriage moving along amidst the waving of hats, and the broad grins of hot, merry faces. In a few seconds,

they poured into the village green, a tumultuous company of rejoicers; the men covered with dust—the horses and carriage with dust, and laurel, and oaken boughs. They drove rapidly up to the old cottage;—hats flew into the air; the whole village rang with one tremendous hurrah; and, amid the bustle, I could just see the gallant officer spring from his carriage, and disappear in the cottage in a moment.

What a moment was that! What a moment to the old people! Here was their son—after twenty anxious years—after all their hopes, and fears, and longings, and triumphs—here was the crowning triumph! Here was their son covered with honours, and still their son. Not one whit forgetful of his poor old parents—not a whit ashamed of his native, lowly hut! In a few seconds he came out. I caught a glance of his tall, noble figure—of his manly, sun-scorched features! I saw that tears had been rolling down those deeply-tanned cheeks. He would have spoken, but his words had fled, from his emotion—the language of excited nature; but he put forth his hand towards the playmates of his boyhood, and in a moment it was seized with avidity, by a dozen eager claimants of recognition; and again a loud hurrah proclaimed the triumph of the assembled multitude.

All that were present were invited to dine with the general on the lawn—it was too interesting a spectacle to be left. I went; and never beheld a sight fuller of the nobility of human nature, and the blessedness of human life. I had time to scan the features of the fortunate warrior; and had not the most convincing evidence to the contrary been before me, I should have said that the whole of his mien and bearing proclaimed him of aristocratic birth: so noble was the expression of his countenance, so gentlemanly, so free from the coarseness or restraint of the

plebeian was his deportment. So much is the internal strength and grace of a great nature superior to the effects of birth or circumstance. I saw the profound happiness with which he gazed round on all the friends of his early days, or their children; his eyes perpetually returning and fixing themselves on those two old people—perfect rustics in person, dress, and manners—who sate and looked again upon him as in a dream of strange wonder. I saw him clasp to his heart that aged priest, who, supported on the one hand by a servant, and the other by his staff, a feeble, silver-headed old man, came slowly to the table; and I heard him thank God that he had made his happiness perfect, by permitting his parents and his benefactor to witness it.

A beautiful place was that where the table was spread. A light canopy was erected over it. Our feet were on the turf, and around us a thousand green shrubs whispered in the breeze—a thousand sweet flowers breathed their odours upon us. Many a joyful day have I since witnessed—a happier than this, never! But I cannot describe; I must go on.

THE NEW RECTOR.

“Now,” said my friend, Pendock Pattel, “if you were a clergyman, I could give you a good thing.”

“What is that?” I asked.

“Why,” he replied, “a rectory of six hundred a year. Our old minister is dead, and I have the living to dispose of. I have already a dozen offers for its purchase, but if I sell anything it shall be something of a mercantile character—something of my own—this I shall *give*.”

“That is right,” I replied; “and pray give it to some worthy man who has nothing besides.”

“Let me see,” he added; “who can that be! I will—I think I know the man.”

He sat down to write, and rising up with a smile, said—

“You shall see the effect of this,” and went out.

I attempted on his return, to renew the subject, but he took his gun down, and said, “Come, let us have a turn into the fields.” In the fields I again returned to the topic! he again turned it off. I was silent.

As we sat at dinner, two days afterwards, the Rev. Charles Neale was announced. Pendock rose up with a sudden flush, and said, “Show him in;” and in the same instant entered a clergyman of about his own age, and of a most interesting appearance. He made a most respectful yet dignified obeisance to Pendock, who on his part sprung towards him, seized him by the hand, cried, “Ten times welcome, my old friend Charles,” and, turning to me, said, “Behold our new rector!”

If I was pleased with the appearance of the clergyman, I was much more so when the excitement of the moment was gone by, and we sat in the midst of general discourse. I felt him at once to be a man of high talent, genuine piety, and a heart warm even to poetry. I looked repeatedly at Pendock with the design of saying, you have made an excellent choice; but I saw in his gratified eye and manner that he was so conscious of it that my words were needless. When I knew the history of Charles Neale, I thanked Pendock, honoured his judgment, and honoured him from my soul.

Charles was the son of a poor widow, who had spent the bulk of her income, and lived herself in the narrowest style, to educate him for the church. Scarcely had he taken orders when she died; her income died with her,

and he had no resource but a small curacy which he obtained in an obscure village. He had, however, passed through the university with high honours—his talents were of the first order; he was of an ardent temperament, and felt confident of pushing his way to a competence in the church. In those days of youthful fancy and soaring hope, he saw, and loved, and married. His wife had but little property. Charles never connected in his mind the ideas of love and money; he found his wife everything that he wished, and he looked for fortune to another source. But years went on, and on, and still he was only a poor curate, while every year added regularly to his family. As he did not succeed as he could wish in his profession, he determined to try the effects of his pen. He wrote poems and essays for the periodicals—he wrote a volume of sermons—he wrote “Tales of a Parish,” illustrating scenes and characters which he had witnessed in the course of his pastoral duties. But he found the path of literature as fully preoccupied as that of church preferment; and those buoyant dreams of youth dispersing at once, he saw before him a prospect of poverty, labour, and obscurity; a prospect of toil and degradation for his wife—a prospect for his children, which wrung his fine and sensitive spirit with inexpressible agony. He sank into a stupor of despondency that threatened to terminate in aberration of intellect. This at length passed away. The unwearied condolence and affection of his wife, the sense of his duty to her and to his children, the power of religion, roused him again to pursue his gloomy track, though it was in tears and sadness of heart.

Years still went on, and brought no change but continued increase of family. His vicar regularly paid his annual visit; praised the rustic beauty of the place; pocketed his eight hundred pounds; paid him his eighty,

and departed to his distant abode. All Charles's early hopes were dead; but they had left behind them a morbid fondness for castle-building, in which his wife would often join him. They would frequently sit in their little room—or as they went their quiet walk through the fields beyond the village, while their children ran and gathered flowers, or pursued insects around them—they would please themselves with supposing that some distant relation, they could not tell who, should leave them an unexpected property. Or they would suppose some particular circumstances should throw a generous patron in their way, and they should, at once, rise to happiness and usefulness. But these dreams gilded only a few moments, and left their horizon darker than before.

As they sat one autumn morning at their breakfast-table, and saw the sun shining on the dark leaves of their little garden, and looking out beyond, saw its gleam lying on the silent fields, now cleared of harvest, Charles said—“Oh! how blessed are they that can ride far away in such a sun as this, and, with hearts free from the vulture-beak of care, can ascend heathy mountains, and look forth on the living sea, and breathe its vigorous gales. Such a life seems half-way to heaven; but for us, heaven must be reached at one stage, and that through the avenue of death.”

As he uttered these melancholy words, the servant entered, and laid a letter on the table. He took it up and opened it, and as he read, his wife, who watched him earnestly, saw his colour at once vanish; the letter fell, and he sat looking on the opposite wall, as stricken with some sense-destroying calamity. She sprang up and seized the letter, and, at the same instant, Charles sprang up too, and clasping her in a convulsive embrace, burst into a passion of tears; and then, snatching up his children one

after another, he embraced them with the vehemence and gestures of a man deranged. During this time his trembling wife read the letter. It ran thus:—

“Aldacre, September 9, 18—.

“Old Friend,—What are you doing? Are you settled down to a plentiful portion, or will you accept one? Our old raven, who has croaked rather than preached these last ten years, has fallen off the perch. Will you succeed him? I want a man that will be a friend for myself and a father for my parish—are you the man? There are six hundreds a-year, so it merits your attention. Pray, come and see. Yours, very truly,

“PENDOCK PATTEL.”

Charles well remembered Pendock. At college they had been great companions, but he had never heard of him since; and in all his day-dreams, Pendock had never presented himself as a patron. There was a levity in the letter which would have made the speculation, so far as it regarded friendship, rather dubious, had he not known the man. But he knew that, with a fondness for a little license of speech, he had a generous soul, unless much altered; and had too, in his general mood, a sterling love of whatever was noble, intellectual, and pure in taste.

Charles was speedily at Aldacre, as we have seen; and a little time sufficed to convince both patron and rector that the event which made the future of the one, would eminently augment the happiness of both. I sate that evening a delighted listener, hearing the two friends recount the history of college days, and hearing Charles lay open the details of his after-life up to this moment—a detail which at once saddened us with the deepest commiseration, and made us again rejoice that Providence

had put it into the heart of Pendock to write to his old associate.

“And now,” said Pendock, “you must be off in the morning for your family. You must pack up in haste, and be back in a week.”

In the morning Charles was gone, with a light heart, and immediately Pendock and myself went to work. We explored the rectory. The last incumbent left no family; there was not a moment's need of delay; we had immediate possession; and partly with the purchase of the best of the furniture, partly with new from the neighbouring town, we soon had the picturesque old place put into the most comfortable and even elegant array. By the day that the new rector and his family were to come, all was in order: everything looked clean, bright, and habitable. Fires were burning within; the garden, grass-plots, and walks were all trimmed and cleaned; and the villagers were looking, ever and anon, out of their doors to get the first glimpse of their new minister. Pendock and myself posted ourselves under a large old mulberry-tree, in an elevated part of his pleasure-grounds, to watch their approach; and the moment that we saw the yellow panels of the chaise flash between the trees in the lane, down we ran to meet them.

Never shall I forget this joyful bringing home! There was the happy father, all flushed with smiles, and tears, and happiness; there we handed out his wife—a gentle, delicate creature, with a lovely face that care and sadness had stamped their melancholy upon, and which, with the expression of present joy, was pale as death. We handed her out, but she trembled so with emotion that she could not walk, and we bore her in our arms, and laid her upon her own sofa, in her own sitting-room. There, too, were

seven children—all, except the youngest, who was too young to be conscious of the great change which had taken place in their destiny—full of eager joy and curiosity. And what a delight it was to see Pendock's exultation; and to see the happy father and mother, when Mrs. Neale had a little recovered herself, kneel down, with all their children about them, and with us too, and pour out their souls in thanksgiving to God, for his great, great goodness, and call upon Him for strength and wisdom to execute those plans of usefulness so often vowed in the days of darkness.

What a delight was it, too, to go with the glad family, and to witness their satisfaction, as they beheld the extent, and comfort, and various conveniences of that ample old house, and to hear them appropriate each room for its particular destination. This shall be our breakfast-room, this our drawing-room; and this *is* Charles's study—oh! how well already supplied with books! Kind, kind friend! This is our bedroom, this for our guests, those for the children, this for the nursery, and so on.

It was a beautiful old place; somewhat low, and somewhat sombre, and its various projections and gables overhung with vines and ivy, and other creeping plants; but, then, it had large bay-windows opening into the garden, through which summer would send the odour of numberless flowers; and the sunshine would come in and fill the place with a pleasant glory. Its garden was large and old-fashioned, with its bowery walks and hazel clumps; its fish-pond at the bottom, and its mighty plane-tree spreading its branches over the rustic seat—over the smooth, mossy turf—over the still waters themselves. But I cannot tell all the delights of the parsonage, its crofts and outhouses, its horse and cow, nor the joy of the people, who instinctively discovered in a moment that good friends were come

amongst them. That evening was one of the most blessed of my life. We spent it with the rector and his family, dining with him for the first time that he dined in the home of his whole future life; our friend Pendock's servants and cook having transferred themselves for the purpose to the parsonage for the day. It was a day like a day in heaven: without, the bells rang merrily—as Bunyan, in his vision, heard them ringing in the celestial city—within, there was profound human happiness; and my friend Pendock writes me, that every day is to him a day of thankfulness over this transaction.

THE FALLEN ONE.

Let us witness a different scene. I was sitting on a rocky eminence, in the north of England, looking down into a deep, long vale, when the sound of a single bell from the lone, grey church in the bottom of the valley, caught my ear. I arose and descended to the village. As I drew near, I could perceive that the bell tolled for a funeral, and every face wore that depth of gloom which announces some more than ordinary sorrow. When I had learned the cause, my heart was touched also with a sadness such as it seldom has experienced.

In this village had, for many generations, dwelt one great family. A gentleman of fortune in a distant county had married the sole heiress of this house; and, to gratify her fondness for her native place, had built an elegant abode here, and here chiefly lived. They had been married for some years, and had three children, when, to the astonishment of every one, the lady was found to have suddenly abandoned her home, and fled with her seducer to the continent.

This, as might have been expected, upon a mind particularly sensitive, and upon a heart devotedly attached to

her, and up to the fatal moment of the elopement totally unsuspecting, had nearly destroyed her husband. He retired with his children to his own ancestral seat, and lived in a deep and melancholy seclusion. The lady's father, a man of stern and passionate character, at first exhibited the madness of passion, and then settled down into the sullen silence of unappeasable hatred. Years went over; and when, at length, the father and the husband, at the same instant, received each a letter from the lost one, she was at the point of death, in penitence and destitution. The letter was written with a harrowing sense of her crime; of all she had lost, and lost for ever, that would touch the most resentful spirit, if it possessed any portion of human feeling. She prayed for pardon—pardon ere she died; and she asked for nothing more than that and a grave—a grave in her native ground. With the approach of death, not all her sense of her crime, and her ignominy, could quench the spirit of her youth; it returned, and she yearned to lie in the spot where she had been born, and where alone she had been innocent and happy.

The father, more true to his resentment than to paternal nature, preserved a sullen silence. Her husband wrote that he forgave her, and that he prayed God to forgive her; and, as the once-loved creature of his young affections—as the once wife of his bosom—as the mother of his children—that she should lie in the tomb which he would build on purpose for her, in her native earth. She read the letter and expired!

They were now bringing the unconscious prodigal to her first and last home. I saw the hearse move slowly and gloomily up the mountain-road. I saw the peasants go out, and gaze upon it, as it drove up to the gates of the churchyard, with weeping eyes, and sobs of mingled

emotions. The guilty, the punished, the repentant—the once happy and idolised creature, came from a terrible and forsaken death-bed, without one kindred mourner—one friend—one attendant, save the hirelings of death, to sleep in the spot which one weak, guilty deed had sown with sorrow and with shame. Her husband, her children, were in their distant home; her father, with a heart more hard and gloomy than the rock into which she was descending, was within sound of her funeral-bell—and cursed her memory as he heard it toll.

That was a Bringing Home that filled me with indescribable sensations of wretchedness, and haunted me for many a day, though I again walked amid the crowds and cheerful sounds of the city.

DREADFUL CHANGES.

AN OLD MAN'S STORY.

Oh! these are dreadful changes, Sam;
 Men talked of change of yore;
 But there never were such changes, Sam,
 In any days before.
 The world is cracked, depend upon't;
 Old things are all upset;
 We'd best bespeak our coffins, Sam—
 Why are we living yet?

All in this sultry weather, Sam,
 As I was broiled in town,
 The country came across my brain
 So cool—I hastened down:
 Down, helter-skelter, by the train,
 Two hundred miles and more;
 A long coach run of twenty hours—
 We did it just in—four!

That's no such bad invention, Sam,
 Thought I, as there I stood,
 Looking round for my native place
 Beneath the well-known wood.

“That’s not so very bad,” thought I,
 Dismissing nervous fear;
 “All in a crack, to whirl me back,
 To Tottinoddum here.”

But where was I? and where the place?
 Oh! listen, listen, Sam!
 I gazed about—’twas very queer—
 It seemed a horrid sham!
 Sure as I live, the world’s turned round,
 Old places are upset;
 We’d best bespeak our coffins, Sam—
 Why are we living yet?

These men, they’re not our sort of men—
 This world is all new cast—
 They live in steams—their ways are dreams,
 The staid old times are past.
 Their telegraphs, their knowing laughs,
 Oh, Sam! they make me groan;
 There’s not a single man or thing
 That they can let alone.

You’ve not forgot that valley, Sam,
 Where we were wont to play,
 And that old brook, which turned about,
 As if ’t had lost its way?
 How there with crooked pin and twine
 We fished for miller’s-thumbs,—
 I turned down there—lark! what a fright!
 Slap-bang an engine comes!

It came slap-bang, it thundered past!
 I could but stand and stare;
 It might have cut me quite in two,
 It missed me by a hair!
 Ay, there they’ve made a railway, Sam,
 Right up that little vale;
 There’s neither brook, nor bush, nor tree,
 Nor cow with whisking tail.

Oh! where are all the miller’s-thumbs?
 I can’t at all divine;
 The fishing fun with twine is done—
There runs a different line.
 But where can Tottinoddum be?
 I hurried on and on,
 But I could see man, house, nor tree—
 No, not a single one!

You must that gate remember, Sam,
 In Tottinoddum-lane;
 Where Simon Biddle used to stand
 In sunshine or in rain.
 Old Simon always watched that gate
 'Gainst rambling cow or ass;
 But there now stands a rail-police,
 He wouldn't let me pass!

“I must to Tottinoddum, sir!”
 He looked erect and grim;
 I hastened on, for not a word
 Could I extract from him.
 I hastened on, I met a man,
 I looked him in the face,
 And cried, “Where's Tottinoddum, sir?”
 He said, “There's no such place.”

“There's no such place! There *is* such place
 For there, sir, I was born.”
 The old man paused and smiled at me—
 'Twas half a smile of scorn—
 “Why, look you, now, we've got a line,
 It runs to Numskull-town;
 And Tottinoddum stood i' th' way,
 And so they—pulled it down.”

“What! pulled it down, both house and hut,
 And church where I was married?”
 “Ay, pulled them down and levelled all,
 There's not a bone has tarried.
 The dead lay down to wait the trump
 At the last judgment-day;
 The railway whistle roused them up,
 They're shovelled all away.”

“But then the school beside the pool,
 I'd there my eddication?”
 “Oh! there's no school beside the pool,
 It's now the railway station.”
 “I choke!—Good man, where's that old well,
 Beloved by every toiler?”
 “Oh! that's closed up; it's now the pump
 That feeds the engine boiler!”

“Good gracious me! all gone! all gone!
 I've seen when all this ground
 Stood thick with primroses in spring,
 And blue-bells nodding round.

I've seen"—"Well, what's the use of talking
Of flowers that once were blowin;
We've here no bells but that which tells
You when the train's a-going.

"There's Mr. Hudson in his glory,
And Austin in his wig,
And Sharpe and Roberts, Manchester,
And Irishmen that dig:
They've made a pretty piece of work—
Your Tottinoddum's down."

"The folks?"—"They're gone the Lord knows where—
But I reckon to the town.

"They've shortened Scripture into scrip;
They've pulled down church and hall.
The parson's got his living still,
And we've got none at all.
The blacksmith has turned engineer,
And grown a famous man;
The squire was chief director made
When first the line began.

"The lawyer-steward's sold his gig,
And got a coach and four;
And for the rest—they found it best
To cut and come—no more.
It's up with Tottinoddum, sir;
But I've no time to stay"—
The old man nodded short and dry,
And dryly strode away.

Oh! these are dreadful changes, Sam!
Men talked of change of yore,
But there never were such changes, Sam,
In any days before.
Sweet Tottinoddum's swept away,
Old things are all upset,
We'd best bespeak our coffins, Sam—
Why are we living yet?



AUGUST.

Thou visitest the earth and waterest it; thou greatly enrichest it with the river of God, which is full of water; thou preparest them corn when thou hast so provided for it.

Thou waterest the ridges thereof abundantly; thou settlest the furrows thereof; thou makest it soft with showers; thou blessest the springing thereof.

Thou crownest the year with thy goodness, and thy paths drop fatness.

They drop upon the pastures of the wilderness, and the little hills rejoice on every side.

The pastures are clothed with flocks, and the valleys also are covered over with corn; they shout for joy; they also sing.—Psalm lxx., 9—13.

How beautiful are the words of the inspired poet, read in this month of harvests, nearly three thousand years after

they were written! For nearly three thousand years since the royal poet looked over the plains of Judea covered with the bounty of God, and broke forth into his magnificent hymn of praise, has the earth rolled on in her course, and the hand of God has blessed her, and all her children, with seed-time and harvest, with joy and abundance. The very steadfastness of the Almighty's liberality, flowing like a mighty ocean through the infinite vast of the universe, makes his creatures forget to wonder at its wonderfulness, to feel true thankfulness for its immeasurable goodness. The sun rises and sets so surely; the seasons run on amid all their changes with such inimitable truth, that we take as a matter of course that which is amazing beyond all stretch of imagination, and good beyond the widest expansion of the noblest human heart.

The poor man, with his half-dozen children, toils, and often dies, under the vain labour of winning bread for them. God feeds his family of countless myriads swarming over the surface of all his countless worlds, and none know need but through the follies of themselves, or the cruelty of their fellows. God pours his light from innumerable suns on innumerable rejoicing planets; he waters them everywhere in the fittest moment; he ripens the food of globes and of nations, and gives them fair weather to garner it. And from age to age, amid his endless creatures of endless forms and powers, in the beauty and the sunshine, and the magnificence of nature, He seems to sing throughout creation the glorious song of his own divine joy, in the immortality of his youth, in the omnipotence of his nature, in the eternity of his patience, and the abounding boundlessness of his love.

What a family hangs on his sustaining arm! The life and soul of infinite ages, and of uncounted worlds! Let

a moment's failure of his power, of his watchfulness, or of his will to do good, occur, and what a sweep of death and annihilation through the universe! How stars would reel, planets expire, and nations perish! But from age to age, no such catastrophe occurs, even in the midst of national crimes, and of Atheism that denies the hand that made and feeds it. Life springs with a power ever new; food springs up as plentifully to sustain it, and sunshine and joy are poured over all from the invisible throne of God, as the poetry of the existence which he has given. If there come seasons of dearth or of failure, they come but as warnings to proud and tyrannic man. The potato is smitten that a nation may not be oppressed for ever; and the harvest is diminished that the laws of man's unnatural avarice may be rent asunder. And then, again, the sun shines, the rain falls and the earth rejoices in a renewed beauty, and in a redoubled plenty.

It is amid one of these crises that we have been of late years; and now again hail the month of harvests with unmingled joy. Never did the finger of God demonstrate his beneficent will more perspicuously than at this moment. The nations have been warned and rebuked, and again the bounty of Heaven overflows the earth in golden billows of the ocean of abundance. God wills that his creatures shall eat and be glad. Nations, therefore, have fittingly rejoiced in every century since the creation in the joyfulness of harvest. It has been a time of activity and songs. Never was there a generation that had more cause to put forth their reaping and rejoicing hands, and sing as heartily, as ours. Praise to God!—the God of harvests; and to him whose cattle are on a thousand hills. Let us go out and rejoice amid the sunshine, and the wheat stooping to the sickle, and the barley to

the scythe, and to the certain assurance that the loaf never was cheaper than it shall be, never the heart of labour more strengthened with abundance.

There is no month more beautiful than August. It has a serene splendour and maturity about it that are delightful. The soil is dry, the sky is bright and beautiful, with scattered and silvery clouds. The foliage is full and luxuriant; the grass fields, mown in June and July, are now full of the richest grass, and cattle wander through them in finest condition, or lie in groups worthy of a painter's hand. There is a sort of second spring in trees, the oak and the elm especially putting forth new shoots of a lighter tint. The hedges put on the same vernal-looking hue; and the heather on the moors, and scabiuses, blue chicory, and large white convolvulus, hawkweeds, honeysuckles, and the small blue campanula, make the fields gay. The nuts, still green, hang in prodigal clusters on the tall, old hedges of old woodland lanes. Young frogs, in thousands, are issuing from the waters, and traversing the roads; and birds, having terminated their spring cares, are out enjoying their families in the sunny and plentiful fields.

It would be a long task to enumerate the flowers that now make brilliant both our gardens and the country. The reign of the rose is, for the most part, over; and the foxglove, the almanac of July, has dropped, day by day, its flowers, beginning at the bottom of the row, and has but a few or none now remaining at the top of the stalk. Pinks, carnations, balsams, scabiuses, agapanthas, evening primroses, coreopses, escholtzias, those purple convolvuluses, the "morning glory" of the Americans, and an abundance of other flowers, still make gardens charming; and apples, pears, plums, melons, and other fruits abound; and the hop-harvest begins.

Towards the end of the month symptoms of the year's decline begin to press upon our attention. The morning and evening air has an autumnal freshness. The hedge-fruit has acquired a tinge of ruddiness. The berries of the mountain-ash have assumed their beautiful orange hue; and swallows twitter as they fly, or sit perched in a row upon a rail, or the dead bough of a tree. The swift has taken its departure. That beautiful phenomenon, the white fog, is again beheld rolling its snowy billows along the valleys; the dark tops of trees emerging from it as from a flood.

Happy are they who have not had their holidays. Many a school has had its day of relaxation, and is again collected. The weary teachers have flown to seaside, and mountain, and foreign scene, and have come back refreshed for another five months' exertion. Many a boy and girl have enjoyed the sweets of home, and are once more at home in their tasks. But, lucky fellows! the lawyers and law-makers are now let loose from their courts and offices, from their midnight debates and their manufacture of bad law, and are the biggest boys in the country. Never for the last six months have they been half so rational. The lawyers, instead of entangling poor human dupes in their webs, are catching flies on the banks of Highland streams; instead of hooking poor-devil clients, they are hooking trout and salmon. Pray Heaven that they might stick to that innocent sport for ever! And the law-makers, good luck to their grouse-shooting and deer-stalking! How sensible, compared with making mile-long speeches that nobody reads, and growing crops of midnight mushrooms, called acts of Parliament, that are but the rubbish of a season!

All the world is out; seashores, bathing-places, rivers, and mountains, at home and abroad, are more populous

now than cities. The tailor, stupified till he mistakes himself for his own goose—the shopkeeper, till he sees no difference between himself and a *counter*—the very mechanic, steals off to some spot of recreation. Innkeepers only are at home to receive their fellow-subjects' money; and poor authors, because they seldom do receive it.

The only people who, towards the end of August, flock into towns, are farmers, who have cut their corn, and naturally escape for awhile out of the country, of which they have had eleven months' surfeit, and now especially enjoy hot pavements, glowing brick walls, crowds of sultry people, and the sight of lions in the Zoological Gardens, with occasional visits to the manufactories of agricultural implements.

HARVEST-HOME.—A HOLIDAY.

Harvest-home treads closely on the heels of August; pleasure to business. In the old agricultural times this was but fair, for pleasure then gave way to business in other respects, and summer being the bustling period, the holidays of the people were fewer at that season. With the exception of the summer solstice, or feast of St. John, which corresponds to the annual festival of Baal, when fires were lit on the mountain-tops, and people danced round them, there was scarcely a holiday of any account till harvest was in. Then broke forth the great holiday, not of saints, but of nature, when the heart, in its gladness at the bounty of Providence, and at that bounty all secured from the elements—all laid up for enjoyment, spoke out in songs and shouts all the country over, and young feet merrily answered it in music. Many a brave old harvest-home has there been held in brave old England. Master and man, youth and maiden, every creature which had laboured in the scorching sun to cut down and

bring in, now assembled to the common feast. The last load has been brought home, covered with boughs, and attended by all the ceremonies that ages had prescribed. Many are the traces of the antiquity of this feast of Ceres, which have lingered to a late time, and which he who would know may find recorded in Brande. The last handful of corn, called the Maiden, has been cut from the field; the harvest-queen, that representative of mother Ceres, has been dressed in wonted gaiety; the cross of woven wheat-ears has been suspended with reverence from the farmer's ceiling; and "Hockie! hockie!" has resounded round the cart bearing home the last load, with bagpipes playing, and youths and maidens dancing. And now the hour of household joy is come. The old farmhouse presents its lowly porch, through the open sides of which roses and jasmynes peep and nod to the blithe incomers. In the stables, the stout horses which bore the corn all home have their mangers heaped with plenteous oats, for the wagoner remembers all their good deeds, and would scorn to eat his plum-pudding if he could not think that they, too, are having their well-merited feast.

In the low and shady house-place, or great sitting-room of the farm-house, the huge and sturdy table is spread for a large company and a large repast, and in drop by twos and threes all the hands that made "rid-work" in the corn-fields. Old men who have seen many such a sight—young men who hope to see many such—maidens, sweet as the jasmynes that nodded to them in the porch, and blushing crimson as the roses that they plucked—are seating themselves at the master's hearty bidding.

Here once a year distinction lowers its crest,
The master, servant, and the merry guest,
Are equal all, and round the happy ring
The reaper's eyes exulting glances fling.
And warmed with gratitude he quits his place,
With sun-burnt hands and ale-enlivened face,

He fills his jug, his honoured host to tend,
To serve at once the master and the friend;
Proud thus to meet his smiles and share his tale,
His nuts, his conversation, and his ale.
Such were the days—of days long past I sing,
When pride gave place to mirth without a sting.

But stop. There is a sort of fatality in our rejoicings and our quotations. The picture is beautiful, but when we contemplate it nearer, we find a part of it torn away. It is a fragment. The present is always wanting to the happy scene. The poet Bloomfield, whose lines we have been reciting, goes on, and he knows well what he is saying:

Ere tyrant custom strength sufficient bore
To violate the feelings of the poor;
To leave them distanced in the maddening race,
Wherein refinement shows his hated face;
Nor causeless hated; 'tis the peasant's curse,
That hourly makes his wretched station worse;
Destroys life's intercourse, the social plan,
That rank to rank cements, and man to man;
Wealth flows around him, fashion lordly reigns;
Yet poverty is his and mental pains.

Too true! Yet even Bloomfield, the Giles of his own story, tells us how common such things were once in England. How the jolly old farmer, and the kind, motherly wife, sate down with all his harvest band, and

Though not one jelly trembled on the board,
Yet plenty reigned; and from his boundless hoard
Supplied the feast with all that sense could crave—
With all that made our great forefathers brave,
Ere the cloyed palate countless flavours tried,
And cooks had Nature's judgments set aside.
With thanks to Heaven, and tales of rustic lore,
The mansion echoed.

Thus it was for hundreds of years. There is a satisfaction in thinking of it—there is a pleasure in living in a land where men have been happy, and pious, and thankful. Ah! what is it that made England what it is,

but these good, old, plenteous times, which nerved the arm, and fortified the heart with rich blood to do, to dare, to win, and enjoy? We know that Mr. Macaulay calls all this in question, and threatens us with statistics to prove it; but we care not for his statistics; we have seen with our own eyes, and know. To his rates of wages, and prices of provisions, at different periods, paraded to show us that present misery is but a continuance of misery past, we boldly set our own knowledge and observation for half a century: we bring up huge commons now gone, and a far less crowded population, to set against his array of figures. We defy any age to produce a picture of the misery of English peasantry bearing any resemblance to that at this moment exhibiting in the columns of the *Morning Chronicle*. It was not by poor-laws, and unions, and beef at ninepence a pound, and wages at six shillings a week, that our power grew like a true British oak, and stretched its branches to every quarter of the globe. No; it was in those old, hospitable farm-houses, where

The sound oak table's massy frame
Bestrode the kitchen floor;

and simple and rejoicing souls sate round its roast beef and plum-pudding, with the richest sauce in the universe, a hearty welcome! Here it was that English vigour grew; here the Briton's manly nature was perfected. Here the lowly son of the plain still felt that he was a son and a brother, for he was treated with a brother's kindness. There has been a bitter winter since then. The blast of a frosty famine has swept across the frosty fields, and the poor man knew no joy in the harvest-home. Corn was taxed, and labour was taxed: there was that ugly caterpillar, taxation, gnawing the tree of life at both ends. As to corn—

Once the happy cottage poor
Hailed it, as it gloomed their door,
With a glad, unselfish cry,
Though they bought it bitterly.

C. WEBBE.

But even that sharp time had gone by: they had "bought it bitterly," till they could buy it no longer, and they became bitter themselves. Rich men—rich, and full, and happy—had shut it out. The poor man abroad grew it, and would fain have sent it to the poor man in England, but the rich and the happy shut it out from the poor and the miserable. There was gone the harvest-home to the poor! They had no harvest, and they had no home, except one which they would rather die than enter.

But Englishmen had for ages eaten the bread of gladness, and its strength was still in them. The rich had been accustomed to rejoice in the prosperity of the poor. This state of things could not last: the assembled Parliament of England decreed once more plenty to the people. Hurra! there is again a harvest-home. The poor eat cheap bread; and though the farmer for the moment complains, when the trying billows of change have settled themselves, as they will, it will be a harvest-time for all. Let the people, then, turn out, like the Teetotallers, with banner and with music; on village greens, and in city areas; beneath the stately oaks of stately parks, and on the breezy heath and hill, let them assemble to shake hands and mingle hearts in joy. Let the steamer sail, and the train run, to all pleasant places with all pleasant people. Let tents be spread, and the cheerful banquet within them, and the merry game go on before them on the green. The Temperance associations have approached nearer to the ideal of a popular festival than any other body yet. They are finding out the art to be glad and social, merry and wise. May such be the

harvest-homes of the better years to come!—more refined, but not less happy than the old ones.

A DAY AND NIGHT IN THE FOREST.

THE DAY.

For many years it was my custom, once at least in the year, to enjoy one long day in the summer solitudes of Sherwood Forest. With one genial companion, setting out at an early hour on foot, I have traversed the heathy hills, followed the clear streams—and nowhere in the world do clearer streams run—rested in the sweet shades of Harlowe Wood, or in the ancient haunts of Birkland, where still stand trees coeval with Robin Hood and King John. There are no days in my life to which I look back as fuller of true happiness. Such a day was a refreshment to the mind and heart for months. In such a stroll, thoughts and feelings have sprung up that have had nature enough in them to diffuse themselves through the press, far and wide. To show how much enjoyment may be gathered in one such day, I will describe one, and that spent in scenes that had chiefly solitude, sunshine, and a delicious air to boast of as their attractions.

There is a piece of scenery about eight miles from Nottingham, which very likely has attracted very little of the attention of the inhabitants of that great stocking-weaving and lace-weaving place, but which is to me very delightful. Entomologists often visit it in the summer, for it abounds in a variety of curious and splendid insects; but otherwise you seldom encounter anything there, except it be a person from the adjacent farms, or the neighbouring village of Oxton. But I have traversed it summer after summer, and always with renewed pleasure. It is a remnant of the fine old forest of Sherwood, denuded, it is true, of its grand

old oaks, but still studded with furze-bushes, carpeted with most elastic turf, and inhabited by a host of the wild denizens of nature. You first become aware of its picturesque beauty by finding yourself at a little bridge, beneath which a most clear and swift trout-stream runs; and, arrested by that charming object, you look around and onward, and discover a long valley, all filled with wild sedges, and showing afar off the glancing light of waters that tempt you to visit them. Below you the stream widens into a little lake, with an island in the centre, where you see the water-hens swimming about and enjoying themselves; and all about the margin of the water, the tall, hassocky sedge stands in such shaggy and isolated masses as Bewick delighted to draw. It is exactly the sort of scenery that he gloried in, and depicted over and over in the haunts of his water-birds, and always with new traits. Lower down, the prospect is bounded by woods and copses; but upward, the valley stretches most invitingly—on the left bounded by green fields, on the right by heathy hills and true moorland grace.

When I last traversed this scene, it was in the middle of May. It was in the company of an old friend, who was as much a child about out-of-door delights as myself. No sooner had we stepped off the highway, than we set foot on the heath, and were surrounded by sights of beauty, smells of wild fragrance, and sounds of waters running and even roaring amongst the wild sedges of the morass. Here, close to the stream, was a shepherd's hovel, erected of heath and turf, and provided with a seat, where the summer sheep-washers took their meals. We entered and sate down, having around us only the heathy hills, the sound of those hurrying waters, and, at some little distance, two little girls, who watched the gate through which we had passed to this moorland—two little rustic

creatures, who there wait all day long, and all summer long, to act the janitors to all passengers, whether mounted or not, and are rewarded with a few halfpence by the more liberal, and amuse themselves during the intervals of business with all sorts of childish contrivances.

Scarcely were we seated in our pleasant hut, when there came birds of various kinds—yellow-hammers, gorse-linnets, with their rosy breasts, pied wagtails, and graceful yellow wagtails, winchats of the richest colours, titlarks, and wheatears—all come to drink and cool themselves. It was beautiful to see them in their happy freedom, believing themselves unobserved by man. Into the transparent waters they waded up to the very necks, twittering, and even singing in their delight; and some stood perfectly still, enjoying the cool liquid as it streamed through their feathers, and others dipped and fluttered it over their bodies, and made a ruffling and a scuffling in the brook that was truly delightful to see. As these flew away, others were continually coming and taking their places. It was evidently a fashionable bathing-place with them, and that obviously because the stream here was shallow, running over the clear, bright gravel most temptingly and accommodately. It was a peep into the life of these lowly but lovely creatures which is rarely attained, and for the rareness of which we have to thank our tyranny. The happy creatures seldom stayed long; the sense of duty lay even upon them. They had their household cares and their young families in the bushes and amidst the shaggy retreats of the moorland.

We went on, and the next moment came upon the banks of a sunny mere, out of which the wild-fowl rose in numbers, and flew round and round, and then off to more distant waters; and when they were gone, we perceived little voices, which had been drowned in their

louder ones. These were the cries of large flocks of ducklings, young teal, coots, etc., which they had left, and which went sailing to and fro amongst the tall pillars of sedge, and, ever and anon, emerging from beneath their drooping masses of leaves, with open beaks, in pursuit of flies, with an active eagerness that made them proof to fear. It was beautiful to see them. Then came the cuckoo, flying past with its cowering motion, and leaden-hued plumage, and that quaint guttural note of which naturalists seem to have taken no notice, and which listeners are in general too distant to hear, catching only its more common monotone, whence it derives its name.

We plunged into the very midst of that mass of jungle, as it may properly be termed, stepping from pillar to pillar of sedge; for this singular plant grows up in solid masses of two or three feet high, whence its long, hard, grassy leaves hang all round, and overshadow the depths of the bog below. From crown to crown of these we went, enlightening each other on the wonderful use these stepping-stones of sedge must have been to our ancestors, in the old, far-off, uncultivated days of the country. Without them, indeed, many parts of forests would have been impassable. From crown to crown we went, now making a false step, and plunging with cries and laughter into the stream below; now scaring the pheasant from her retreat; and now startling the trout, as we came suddenly on a bend of the brook that wound through them. But we could not discover what we sought most earnestly—the nests of snipes which are said to be found here.

I said that few people, except the peasantry, are seen here: yet, while in the very midst of this wild morass, there came riding up the valley a lady and gentleman, seeming to enjoy the scene as much as ourselves, and certainly adding no little to its effect. Never in my eyes

do elegant people show so well as when riding in such scenes. In the streets of great cities, or in the parks of the metropolis, they seem to make only a part of the pageant of the place—part only of the great mass of artificial splendour and human rivalry. Hither they seem led by purer and more elevated tastes, and call up far different feelings. You cannot but imagine them fond of the country, fond of domestic life, fond of the poetry and reading which attaches to such a life; that they have hit on the true track of happiness, or, rather, have not been beguiled by modern ambition and dissipation from it.

Well, let them go, whoever and whatever they were; to me they furnished a delightful picture. I saw them called out by the charms of the country on this sweet clear morning. I imagined all the heartfelt circumstances that attended their progress; their admiration of the beauty around them, of the fresh air, of the heathy hills, the affectionate associations and literary recollections which the time, the season, and the scene would call up, while they were hastening away again, perhaps, to

Some cottage home, from toils and towns remote,
Where love and lore alternate hours employ
To snatch from heaven anticipated joy.

But, wherever they went, we made our way out of the bogs to the solid ground they were now traversing, and thence to the hills; and there the scene which now presented itself was like what we may suppose in some enchanted land. The whole valley and open hills were scattered with heaps of the most resplendent gold—in other words, the gorse-bushes were in full bloom, and not only filled the air with their rich orange-odour, but every branch was covered with a profusion of such large and lustrous blossoms, as those who see the furze only in dusty lanes have no conception of. In the larch-wood,

on the opposite side of the valley, we could see all the openings and ridings filled with this vegetable glory, just as if it were a fairy-land itself, and all its green avenues were paths of woven gold. To talk of such a thing gives no adequate idea of its beauty. To contemplate this scene, we threw ourselves down in a little glen on the turf, and lay and looked on the rich expanse. Here accident introduced us to a new pleasure. My old friend, who could not long be severed from his pipe, drew it forth, and began calmly to send up blue wreaths of smoke, that in their hovering stillness were typical of his own content. But other smoke of a more turbid and rapid character, and the crackling of fire, and the rushing sound, as of a sudden whirlwind, close behind us, startled us from our repose, and made us spring to our feet. The lucifer-match, flung carelessly behind my old friend, had ignited a stupendous gorse-bush; and never did painter behold a scene more fit for his pencil. The whole bush was, as it were, at once filled with fire. With all its greenness and all its flowers, the flames devoured it with wonderful eagerness and rapidity. In a few seconds it was one mass of intense glory. It gave us a very vivid conception of the burning bush which Moses saw in the plains of Midian. The interior was one mass of white heat; the exterior, streams of brilliant flame, mingled with columns of rolling smoke and fire. In a few moments it was burnt to ashes.

Charmed with the incident, we ascended to the hill-top, and set on fire another bush. Scarcely had it taken fire, when four men came running from the gravel-pit, amazed, as they said, that the forest had taken fire; and so enchanted were they at the beauty and vivacity of the flame, that they seemed transported out of themselves. Old men as they were, they snatched up pieces of flaming

furze and set fire to five or six other large bushes. The fire raged and spread; the whole hill-top was in a flame, and had it been night would have alarmed the whole country round. Having had our frolic, and seen not only a scene of wonderful and unexpected beauty, but how extremely inflammable the plant is, and, therefore, how readily whole tracts of forest might be laid waste by it, we were anxious to see the whole fire extinguished, and had some difficulty to restrain the excitement of these peasants, who now became more like wild bacchanals than sober Nottinghamshire labourers.

Suddenly the men, as if struck by one simultaneous feeling, assumed a sober look, and turned to regain the gravel-pit and their labour. Astonished at this, I looked round, and at once perceived the cause. A large, formerly-looking man, on a large horse, followed by two greyhounds, came riding at a rapid rate over knoll and heath towards us. There was an air of authority and excitement about him: he had evidently been alarmed by the fire.

“Who is that?” asked we.

“It is Sir John Sherbrooke’s bailiff,” said the men, and were hurrying away to their work.

“Halloa! halloa, there! Wagstaff! Beardall! Birks! What’s this? What’s this fire? Come hither, I say! Come hither!”

The fellows looked aghast at each other. “There’ll be the devil to pay now,” said they, one to the other, and stood like so many posts, while the bailiff came galloping up, his horse breathing loud, as after a smart chase, and his hoofs sounding over the heath as if careering over a hollow vault.

“What’s this? I say,” again demanded the large man, drawing suddenly close up to us. “How the devil came

this fire? I say. Eh? eh? Why the devil don't you speak?"

The man was a man of truly large dimensions, of a full, large, broad face, flushed with a ruddy colour. His broad straw hat made his hot countenance show the redder and hotter. His ample plaid waistcoat, blue coat, and stout old boots, gave him a half-farmerish, half-bailiffish look. He had a stout dog-whip in his hand, and the greyhounds now having strayed somewhat wide after the rabbits, which abounded there, he put the stock to his mouth and gave them a whistle like that of a railway engine.

"What is it, I say, Bunting? What is it, I say, Wagstaffe? Are the devils dumb? What is the cause of this conflagration, eh?"

"Ax those gentlemen," said the men, giving us a look, and beginning with all their might to hew and shovel up the gravel.

"Can you explain it, gentlemen?" said the bailiff, touching his hat respectfully.

"We can," we replied, and related to him what had occurred.

"Lod-a-massey!" exclaimed the large man; "can that really be the case? What! a *greyn* goss-bush burn like a tar-barrel! Dry goss ivery owd wife, and ivery baker, knows 'ull tear away like lightning—but greyn goss bu'n a-that-ens! Why, I niver heard o' such a thing in aw my born days!"

I asked him if he would like to see the experiment repeated. He replied, of all things. So we took out a lucifer match, ignited it, and applied it to a bush near us. The bush stood at least seven feet high; it was at least two yards in diameter. It stood one of the most resplendent objects in nature—one stately pyramidal mass, all green and blazing gold, with summer fronds and flowers.

In a moment the fire crackled, flashed through the beautiful mass, flamed up like a furnace, and, like a furnace, in another second was one intense, dazzling body of whitest heat, succeeded by red and rolling volumes of flame and smoke. In less than a minute it lay a heap of grey ashes.

“Lod-a-massey!” exclaimed the large man, “that beats anything that I’d an idea on.”

He sank into deep thought, shook his head, and said—

“Gentlemen, what you’ve now shown me is very surprising, and, let me add, very dangerous. If these owd fools of gravellers have been thus fired up by a sight like this, what may they not be doing when nobody’s by? I tremble to think on’t. Look, gentlemen, all round—far as you can see are woods, or young larch plantings. These are full o’ goss—a touch of a match, and away they go in a low and a blaze that not God Almighty—I was going to say—could stop. Don’t you see, gentlemen—don’t you comprehend my meaning? The consequences might be tremendious!”

We admitted it. “And then,” added he, “it’s not those owd fools that I’m afraid on so much as young lads getting a notion that they can make a blaze a-that-ens. They’ll be trying it on, Lord knows to what mischief; and this part of the country, I can tell you, is dreadfully infested by youth.”

“I should not have thought so,” said my old friend, who was evidently very much tickled at the idea of the country being infested by youth, as if youth was some noxious vermin. “I should not have thought it, sir. It looks to me a very solitary country.”

“O Lod, no, sir! You are quite mistaken. The villages in the forest *sny* with children—they are as thick as rabbits in a warren. Oxton, Calverton, Blidworth—bless me! but you should see what lingens of lads they can but

turn out. The country is dreadfully infested with youth. Halloa, there! stop Jack; stop lad!" shouted the bailiff, suddenly breaking off his discourse, to a boy who was driving a spring-cart along the highway near.

"That's my spring-cart, gentlemen, and if you'll go and take a cup of tea wi' me, I shall take it as a particular favour. I must have some further discourse with you about this matter. We mun see what's to be done to prevent mischief. But first I must give these old fools a bit of a fright."

Here he rode up to the edge of the gravel-pit, and said, "Now, lads, mark what I say. This bush-burning might be dangerous if any vagabond chaps got to know on't. We might have aw th' plantations and aw th' corn burnt down. So mark! I expect yo'll keep it to yersens. Yo will?" They all nodded their heads, for hats they had none on. "Well, do then, or, mark what I say, if it gets out and mischief's done, yo are the first that shall come into trouble."

He turned and rode back to us. "Here, Jack," said he, "ride my tit home. We'll tak' th' cart. If you'll oblige me by riding in it, gentlemen—it's quite clean," said he, turning to us.

Presently we were going at a brisk rate over the forest ground—presently we passed through a gate into large inclosures, which still, however, had a forest look. They were overgrown with heather, and the hedges were chiefly of gorse, and planted with double rows of Scotch firs. Anon we entered great Scotch-fir woods. The evening was fast coming down; deep shadow lay on the whole wild scene. Our conductor pointed out to us continually as we drove on, that all the fences here were of gorse; that it lined the road-sides which we passed.

“Only think,” he repeated, “if any of these inflammable bushes took fire, the conflagration would be tremendous. Why, I seem to be living in a region where everything is rubbed with turpentine—I never gave it a thought before.”

We endeavoured to calm his fears. We told him that such conflagrations had not occurred for a thousand years, and would not, as indeed they have not. We drove on. The odour of the pine-woods came breathing on our senses; we could see on either hand wide brown shades and columned trunks of trees, but nothing more. Before us one narrow speck of light, far distant, showed that the road we were traversing still proceeded for a mile or more in a straight line. Over this ground we drove, the hooting of an owl, and the occasional tinkle of sheep-bells, in some of the wild forest fields, were all that caught our attention. At length, we heard the barking of dogs; our driver suddenly turned aside down a sandy lane, and before us, looming through the shades of evening, stood a large mass of buildings—the farm-house, and barns, and offices of our host.

“Yo, ho?” shouted the bailiff; gave a crack of his whip, and a door opened on the other side of the ample yard, showing a bright, blazing kitchen, out of which ran a boy, who opened the gate, and in we drove. Here we ended “The Day in the Forest;” here we stayed all night; and what further concerns our sojourn, our host, and other matters then and there arising, must be left to

THE NIGHT IN THE FOREST.

“Caleb, my dear! Caleb, is that you?” called a female voice; and a plump little woman’s figure darkened the blaze from the kitchen-door.

“Ay, it’s mysen,” replied our host the bailiff. “Get

tea, Lizzy, get tea. Here are two gentlemen; they'll stay all night."

"Oh no! that we cannot," we both exclaimed at once.

"You cannot!" exclaimed the bailiff, as if in vast astonishment. "Nonsense," added he, drawing out the word to the length of his own long figure; "but I say you must, and shall; and so no more about that. Tea, Lizzy, tea, and summut to't," continued he, advancing towards the kitchen-door.

The good wife retreated to give orders. The next moment we stood in a large kitchen, in which a fire of logs of wood was blazing away, and around it, on benches, a number of farm-men and boys, who sat basking in the glow, after the labour of the day. These men, and two or three fat, ruddy, red-armed servant-girls, who were standing about, stared at us half-sheepishly. From the ceiling depended a huge rack, covered with enormous fitches of bacon; and hams and pieces of hung-beef, depending in various places, proclaimed that we were in a land of plenty.

Our hostess threw open the parlour-door, and the bailiff spread out his huge arms, as if he were guiding a lot of sheep into a fold, and said, "Walk in, gentlemen, walk in." There was a wood-fire also blazing in this ample parlour, and that most agreeably, for the nights in May are seldom too warm; and our hostess, a stout, fresh, comely little woman, seemed as much pleased to see us as if we were old friends. The room was well furnished, and carpeted, yet with a certain rudeness that smacked of the forest. On the wall hung various prints of racers, sporting scenes, and the portraits, done by some execrably-bad artist, of our host and his wife. The tea-things were already on the table. One fat, rosy girl brought in the

kettle, another a huge round of beef, and after it a pigeon-pie; and down we sat. Mr. Caleb Stirland—for such was our host's name—plunging his knife into the pigeon-pie, and begging me to help myself, or any one else, to beef, as they preferred it, broke out, at the same time, to his wife thus—

“ I say, Lizzy, do you know that we are living on the top of a barrel of gunpowder?”

“ Oh, laus! no, my dear! What do you mean?”

“ Well, then, on a tar-barrel, and may be in a blaze any minute?”

“ Oh, laus, no! Good gracious, Caleb, my dear!”

“ Well then—but yo won't be frightened, Lizzy, wench—yo won't be frightened? Well, then, in spirits of turpentine, in spirits of wine, in naphtha, in—but don't frighten yourself, Lizzy—and maybe in a blaze, like a tangle of tow, before you can cry, ‘ Whew! ’ ”

“ The Lord above save us! Caleb, Caleb, what do you mean?” cried the terrified wife.

The bailiff set his huge hands on each side of the pigeon-pie, with the knife and fork standing erect in his sinewy grasp, with a face full of broad humour, laughing eyes, and a look wandering from one to another of us, which said as plainly as looks could, “ La, now! isn't that fine? Haven't I set her a-wondering?”

“ Well, then,” said he, “ I'll tell thee what, Lizzy—I've never been so much astonished since I saw old Watkinson's horse drop down dead at the Green Dragon, and die directly, as I've been to-day.”

And here he related, with a certain exaggeration, what he had seen of the gorse-burning. In his account the whole forest had been on flame, or Oxtan Hall, or Lincoln Minster, to his thinking: how he had ridden

over hedge and ditch, and what it had turned out. What a fright he had given the owd fools of gravellers; and then there was a significant laugh playing in his eyes, and on his jolly cheeks, at the fears he had feigned to ourselves of his gorse hedges, and woods full of gorse, and tar-barrel similes. The man was an arrant humourist, and had no fear at all of the inflammability of furze.

“ Ah!” said he, at length, to put an end to his wife’s fears, “ it’s all fudge, Lizzy. Goss has grown all over this country these thousand years; and is the country burnt up? Not it. We’re as safe in it as our grannies wor. But I tell thee, Lizzy, it is really a great sight is a burning goss-bush; and I propose, that when the sarvants are gone to bed, as we goen out into the combe there, at t’other side of the wood, and set fire to one.”

The wife at first protested against it, and said it would raise the country, and what would Sir John think if he heard of it; but the bailiff scouted all this, for it was evident that he was a man that carried things pretty much as he would. Tea being, therefore, removed, and Mrs. Stirland having given the servant-girls permission to go to bed, the house was soon clear of them; the men were gone before. Mrs. Stirland put on her bonnet and warm cloak, and forth we sallied, the bailiff locking the door, and putting the key in his pocket. I observed that he took a tremendously stout stick in his hand, and what he called a gawn in his other. This was a sort of wooden pail, with a long handle on one side.

“ What’s that for, Caleb?” asked the wife.

“ What for? To put the fire out, lass, to be sure.”

The night was pitch-dark. We descended into a lane, which was deep-worn between its banks of sand. These banks, however, we could not see; we could only feel

them. Caleb, who took his wife by the arm, bade us come on behind them; and we went on, trusting to their guidance. Anon we came out into the open fields. We could, however, see nothing; and the bailiff bade us come boldly on, as it was not many yards farther. The next moment we stopped. "Here it is," said he. The next instant we heard the scrape of a match, and the bush was on fire. By the light of the blaze, we saw not only a stately gorse-bush standing before us all in flame, but that we were in a hollow field, totally surrounded by woods. At the first flash of the flame, a flock of sheep, which were lying quietly near for the night, rose up and scampered away with a rub-a-dub sort of thunder of their hundreds of feet. The bush flamed up into the most rapid and intense light. The bailiff's wife gave a scream of consternation; the bailiff stood, exclaiming, "By Guy! did you ever see the like of that?" The woods round were lit up as with day; the column of fire before us was ten times more fierce, brilliant, and amazing, than by day. In the next instant it was gone. The ashes lay glowing on the earth; the deepest darkness surrounded us; and the bailiff's wife was full of fears that the sudden blaze might have been seen. "By whom?" exclaimed the bailiff. "Pshaw! who can see into this hollow, over the tops of the woods?" He ran with his gawn a little way down the valley, and brought water, which he cast on the ashes. There was not a spark left unquenched, and we began to retrace our way.

Presently the darkness which had closed tenfold around us after the dazzling effect of the fire, began in some degree to disperse. We could discern the ground dry and sandy, and the black fir-trees around us. The breeze had risen, and sighed and moaned singularly in the

woods. The deep lane again received us to darkness; and over our heads the black trees soughed dismally. When we issued from the lane, near the house, the dogs in the farm-yard began to bark, perceiving us, and from the distant forest were answered by other ban-dogs. There was a wildness, an unprotectedness in the scene, which fell vividly on our senses.

“Are you never afraid,” I asked, “of being out thus in woods alone?”

“Afraid?” asked the bailiff; “what should we be afraid of? There are a dozen of us—strong fellows, too, some of us; we have a score of dogs, and as many guns and pistols. By Leddy! the thieves would as soon think of attacking Nottingham garrison. Hark! that’s the bark of old Brock, the blood-hound. Ha! in the morning you must see that fine fellow. That *is* a dog worth seeing! I’ll tell you what he did last autumn only. Poor fellow! Poor Linecker! he found him when nobody else could!”

“Well, let that rest to-night, Caleb,” said the wife, eagerly. “You shan’t tell that to-night.”

“Well, not till we are got into the house at all events,” said the bailiff.

“Nor then, either; do you hear, Caleb?”

“Yes, *then*,” said the bailiff, “I’ll tell it, spite of thee, wench.”

“Then I shall leave you,” said Mrs. Stirland.

“So be it, chuck, so be it; but set us a sup of brandy on the table first, and let us have pipes. Our old friend, here—where are you, old friend? Oh, there you are!—oh, you like a pipe, eh? The burning bush to witness—ha! ha!”

The stout yeoman unlocked the door as he spoke. We were again in the parlour; the pine logs were blazing cheerfully; the good wife set on the table pipes and de-

canters; the bailiff fetched out again the round of beef; Mrs. Stirland bade us good night; and we sat down to a smoke and a talk. Caleb Stirland seated himself in a large easy chair, fished out from beneath its curtained bottom a couple of spittoons, one of which he pushed towards my old friend; I myself, as no smoker, getting only a poke or two from Mr. Stirland's jokes.

“Ay, you must see that dog Brock in the morning. That is a dog. Lauk! there'll never be a thief come near here while he's alive. Strong as a lion, red as a fox, true as the day, he'd track a thief to the bottomless pit, if need were, and hold him there too till you came up. Ah! poor Linecker, he found him when nobody else could. Job Linecker, gentlemen, was our gamekeeper here. Seven years Job had inhabited the little cottage down by the Rainworth Water, where Sam Mugriff, the keeper, lives now. Job was as true in his line, as Brock is in his. He scoured the woods and the open forest—ay, there was plenty of all sorts of game in his time—partridges, pheasants, grouse, wild ducks, and what not. Job and old Brock! By Garr, nobody need come shooting or fishing here, either, in vain. There's plenty of trout in the Rainworth Water, and the dams below here, when you've a mind for a day's fishing. Well, Job kept the coast clear; but Job, like other foolish young fellows—and very young he warn't neither—must fall in love. Ay, that's a game that leads gamekeepers astray, as well as poachers. And in this case there were those who didn't hesitate to call Job the poacher, for he fixed his fancy on one that a good many others had fixed their fancies on; and one, it is said, and maybe it's true, she was to be married to. But Job was a persuasive chap, and once alongside of this Fanny Jackson, he soon made the game his own. But laws-a-

me! what a place he'd gone to for a wife—to no other than Sutton-in-Ashfield. Gentlemen, you know Sutton-in-Ashfield—five thousand in population, and not a respectable person in it.”

“Pooh!” said my old friend; “not a respectable person?—pooh, pooh—there are many, scores, hundreds, thousands! Why, I was born there myself.”

“I beg your pardon, my good friend, were you really? But then, you left it. Ay, *I* remember when there were respectable inhabitants there—oh ay,—but then, like you, they left it.”

“Nothing of the sort,” exclaimed my old friend, testily. “I tell you there are plenty of respectable, excellent, estimable people there.”

“Well,” resumed Mr. Caleb Stirland, “there may; but what I call a respectable man is a man of a thousand a-year. How many of those do you reckon?”

“Oh!” said my old friend, “we’ll not dispute that point—the respectability of a thousand a-year—if that’s your standard; pray go on, sir.”

“Well, sir, Job went to Sutton, and from Sutton he brought his wife; as pretty, well-behaved, loving a creature she was as ever sun shone on.”

“And respectable?” demanded my old friend.

“No—something far above it—she was a good un. She was as handsome as a gipsy queen, cheerful as a May morning; sung like a lark, had a voice like a nightingale, and was as busy as a bee from morning to night. It did one good to go past that cottage of hers, and see her pretty face, and what a little paradise she had made of her home. But the rascallions that Job had snatched her away from vowed vengeance; and very soon all these woods and the forest, that for years had been as quiet as the land of green

ginger, swarmed with poachers. Bang! bang! went guns i' th' woods, now here, now there, and sometimes in two or three places at once. We were up and off night after night every one of us. It was the same with the keepers of Colonel and General Need, and other gentlemen about. By the help of Brock we soon laid hold of some of my chaps. They were clapped into Southwell House of Correction because they could not pay the fines, but this did not at all mend matters. To begin wi' Sutton is just as well as to begin wi' a hornet's nest. That pragmatic little firebrand, Jerry Brandreth, that had his head taken off at Derby for his doings, once was a fine fellow amongst them; and as to gleaning rascallions out of Sutton, good gracious! what fools we were, only think, four or five thousand on 'em! Well, the more we resisted 'em the hotter they came; the more we took the thicker they came. Pheasants, hares, fish, all became scarce; at last my chaps began to cut up th' young trees i' th' plantations. 'Now, my lads!' I exclaimed to mysen, 'now we shall have you, for this is a transportable offence.' Well, we watched, we caught 'em, and we transported a few on 'em, for they had maimed some of our cattle, as well as trees. But what then? Did that cure 'em? Not a bit of it! Where we had one before, we had a score now; and talk of setting fire to goss, they set fire to the ling on the forest, and it burned clean away for seven miles, with game, trees, and some sheep into th' bargain. Lod-a-massey! if you had seen it at night, how the flames ran and roared along in the wind. How the smoke rolled, and made black shadows like giants and devils dancing in the fire; and what with blazes here, and pitch darkness there, sure enough you'd ha' thought it the infarnal regions, and nought else.

“ Well, this seemed to satisfy them for awhile. We thought the storm was blown over. The ling sprung fresh and green over hill and dale. The old oaks with their smoked and singed trunks, many on ’em, put out again, fresh as if Maid Marian was a-looking at ’em, and autumn came and game was again plentiful. But just at this time in comes Job’s wife one morning, as missis and mysen were sitting at breakfast, and asks after Job.

“ ‘Job!’ says I; ‘ why, wench, thou should know best where he is.’

“ ‘ I wish I did,’ said she, and her colour went, and she looked like a corpse.

“ He had never been at home that night. After dark he went out as usual, with his favourite dog, Cockfoot,—he gave him that name because he always cocked up one fore-foot when he set game,—and when she woke early in the morning, he was not come back. From four she had been up, traversing the woods and the forests, but nothing could she hear or see; nobody had seen him.

“ Lod-a-massey! my heart jumped into my mouth. ‘ He’s done for, sure enough,’ thought I to myself; but I did not let her see how it touched me. I tried to comfort her; told her to sit down and get a good breakfast; that no doubt but he was on the track of some scamp, and had got some one to join him, and they might have gone a good chase. I would mount my mare and be off to find him. But all I could say didn’t cheer her. She would not eat; but said she must go home to feed the birds—they had a heap of canaries, and goss-linnets, and piping bullfinches—and milk the cow.

“ I up and off, helter-skelter. I met carters, and asked them if they had seen Job. No! I went on to where some men were at work i’ th’ woods. I galloped over the forest, and asked the people that are always gathering

bilberries or sticks, or cutting ling, or what not. Not a soul had seen Job!

“It was about two o’clock, on as fine an autumn day as ever shone on the old forest, as I came out of Harlowe Wood, on the side next to Fountain Dale, and the scene of the Curtal Friar and Robin Hood. The birch-trees that skirt the wood hung in bright yellow over the brown heath; the waters glanced merrily down the valley amongst the green bogs; the larks were up in the air, singing as heartsomely as if it were spring,—and woods, and sky, and everything looked as if God meant us all to be happy in such a world. At this moment, and as this thought crossed my mind, what should I see but Fanny Linecker sitting in the green fosse, close by the gate under the woodside. As I caught sight of her, she started up,—I shall never forget that face till my dying day,—and said, in a husky voice, ‘Have you heard of him, master?’ Oh! God knows, I would have given my best field at that moment to be able to say, ‘Yes.’ But I could not, and I was choked; my heart seemed choked, as if it would split. At the sight of my looks, for I have no doubt I went as pale as a sheet, the poor woman sate down again with a groan.

“I got off, and tried to comfort her. I told her that no news was good news. Nothing could have happened, or the dog would have come home, and *somebody* would have seen *something* connected with it. It was all of no use. She had been hurrying all round the forest, and to all his commonest haunts, all the morning, and she was now quite worn out with fatigue and trouble. When she recovered herself a little, she told me she had fancied that she could trace Job’s footsteps across the bogs, and up this way. We went together to look, but I could see nothing.

“‘It’s nothing but an Indian,’ said I, ‘Fanny, that

could track a footstep here, on this dry sand, and over the bog there.'

" 'But Brock,' said Fanny,—'but the bloodhound, sir, he could trace him.'

" 'By Garr!' I exclaimed, 'that I should never have thought of that. To be sure, that is the very thing. Get up behind me, and take fast hold on me, that thou doesn't fall off, and we will get him, and set him on the track.'

" Away we went, as fast as I could, with poor Fanny behind me. The whole neighbourhood now had heard the news that Job was missing, and were running eagerly to our place. Fanny said, 'God send he may be come before we get home!—he may, sir; don't you think he may?' 'To be sure,' I answered; 'not unlikely.' But the number of people that we met on the inquiry knocked the last hope out of me. We rode on as silently as the eager inquiries of farmers, gentlemen, and workpeople would let us. When we reached Job's house, Fanny leaped down of herself, and ran in as if she had lost her fatigue. She brought out one of Job's shoes; and Brock, who had been fetched by one of our men, was set to smell it, and to trace Job's course from the door.

" Brock wagged his tail with pleasure on smelling at Job's shoes, and began to snuff along the ground; but it was of no use. There had been too many people trampling about since. I told all to stand still, and took the dog a little beyond them, and then led him across the track where they had been. In two minutes he began to snuff eagerly, gave mouth, and went off up the very way towards the forest.

" 'I knew it! I knew it!' cried Job's wife, hysterically; and wringing her hands, followed after. I bade her be calm, and the rest of the people to keep back, and keep quiet, so as not to confuse the dog. Judge my astonish-

ment, to see the hound go steadily on the very track that Job always took to Harlowe Wood. He issued on the open forest, traversed the bog by a single track that Job fancied that nobody but himself knew to be passable, and took his way to the very gate of the wood out of which I had come. As he came near to it his pace became a rapid gallop; his look fierce and tremendous; his bark became a terrible howl, that went through me like a knife. I felt as if I had ice in my heart, and in every vein of my body; my knees trembled, and knocked against the saddle, so that my horse started, and was difficult to hold. The gentlemen near me gave looks at each other, and said in a low voice—‘He’s there!’ Poor Fanny! poor Fanny! she came on wild and fast. Many gentlemen offered to take her up behind; entreated her to get up, but she would not. She was a desperate woman, and death-like and haggard, she ran on by the side of my horse, and kept up with the fleetest. A strange and unearthly howl from the dog in the wood made us speed forward. We did not stay to open the gate, we leaped the fence, and plunged on in the direction of the sound. There was the dog standing, half sunk in leaves and bilberry-bushes, as if turned to a stone. ‘What is it? What’s there?’ cried several voices. ‘We can see nothing.’ But, at this moment, poor Fanny Linecker sprung forward with a wild shriek, and sunk down by the dog in a swoon.

“We leaped from our horses, and ran to her. Gracious Heaven! there, sure enough, was Job! The butt-end of a gun first was seen protruding from the leaves—a hand next was visible. We softly lifted away the insensible woman; pulled away bilberry-bushes and withered leaves, that had been thrown upon him, and there lay the murdered man.

“Gentlemen, we brought away the wretched wife, and

the dead husband—how, I must leave you to guess. Poor Fanny! she was more dead than alive, and you may be sure she had a terrible time to go through. Some thought she would never get over it, and others said it would turn her brain. But it did neither. She is still living, and working for her bread in Mansfield—but such a weak, such a withered, aged, altered creature, you would not know her, gentlemen—you would not know her, had you seen her before.”

“But how had that been done?” we asked.

“Ay, that I have to tell you,” said the bailiff. “It was evident that poor Job had been knocked on the head with a cudgel, or the like heavy weapon. His hair was all clotted with blood at the back of the head: and the doctor who was sent for from Mansfield, found his skull dreadfully fractured there. Well, now was to find out the villains. I was sure they lay in Sutton, and so it proved. One of the gentlemen, in leaping the old railed fence of the wood, saw a small rag and a metal button sticking fast on a splinter of an oak post. He took it, and now produced it, saying that was probably from the coat of one of the murderers. It was a small piece of sunburnt, coarse cloth, with a metal button on it, and had evidently been torn from a coat-lap of some one in too great a hurry to notice it.

“‘Put the dog on the track of the murderers!’ cried one. ‘Ay, ay,’ cried many voices; ‘set him on; let him hunt them out, and,’ with indignant oaths, ‘let him tear them limb from limb.’

“‘Stop,’ I cried; ‘that won’t do. That is a very delicate matter. We must not give way to our anger. We must not have it said that we hunt men, not even murderers, with bloodhounds here in England. It would soon be said that we were as bad as the Spaniards in Mexico, or as Carolina slave-drivers. No! that won’t do; but Brock

may help us still, and no harm done. I drew from my pocket his muzzle and a cord, which I had foreseen might be wanted. These I put on, and said, 'Now we may let the dog guide us, and wrong be done to nobody. Let some gentleman ride off to Mansfield, and tell Jack Mettam, the police-officer, to meet us at Sutton Town-end; we may leave the rest to him.'

" 'I'll do that,' cried the doctor; and away he spurred over the forest towards Berry-Hill, and so for Mansfield.

" We now let the dog smell at the rag, and endeavoured to put him on the track. It was agreed that none but myself and two of my men should follow the dog, that we might not excite attention by the appearance of such a crowd. The dog soon got a scent, and went off, as we expected, in the direction of Sutton. A man by turns kept hold on the cord fastened to his collar; and a rough walk enough he gave us of it. He did not go along the highway, but struck right through the woods, over fields and hedges, and along by-ways. It was all that the gentlemen could do to keep the common people from following us, spite of the orders; for when they saw the dog going off eagerly towards Sutton, they seemed out of themselves, and began to crowd over the hedges on all sides, and after us. I was obliged to stop, and swear that if any man came after us I would unmuzzle Brock and set him on him; and the gentleman galloped before me, and ordered them back. But, spite of this, a good many of 'em struck off, some one way, and some another, and cut across fields, and up to the tops of heights, to watch us; but they did not dare to come very near us. On we went, over rough and smooth, till we came to the place appointed at Sutton Town-end. The doctor had done his errand well—there stood Mettam and a stout constable. It was now dark, and we proceeded cautiously. Mettam and his man follow-

ing at some distance, myself and one of my men going on with the dog; the other man going on alone before; thus we escaped, as much as possible, notice. Luckily, the streets were very clear of people; and, favoured by the darkness, we proceeded through the place, till the dog turned down an alley at the farther outskirts, and stopped at a particular door. Here his impatience was so great as to cause us some trouble: but by the aid of Mettam and the constable we forced him away from the place, and my two men conveyed him homewards as fast as they could. As soon as the dog was off the ground, we entered the house, and found the very fellow at work in his stocking-frame to whom the rag belonged, and with the very coat on his back.

“At the sight of us he turned deadly pale: but when he saw Mettam take out the rag, and, lifting up his coat-skirts, show where it was torn from, he gave himself up for lost. A nesher* rogue I never saw. To save his own neck, the fellow soon turned king's evidence; and, by his confession, his three companions were soon secured. It came out that this very fellow had gone down near Job's house in the evening; and, on Job coming out on his nightly round, contrived to be seen distinctly by him, and then made off. Job, as they expected, gave chase, seeing only this one fellow, and he without a gun, and rashly pursued him into the very wood in question, where the others then lay in ambush; and the moment he entered, knocked him down with the butt-ends of their guns. The next instant they despatched his dog in the same manner, before the poor animal, which was at his master's heels, could turn to escape. Thus, no guns were fired, no noise of any kind made; and no alarm being received

* More faint-hearted.

by any one, they hastily tore up bilberry-bushes, scraped together fallen leaves, and throwing them over the murdered man and his dog, made off. As it happened, no one saw them but—God. What was strange, when we came to see the place again, poor Fanny, when I found her by the wood,¹ was within five yards of the body of her murdered husband. It was only on the other side of the fence.”

When the bailiff had ended his story, we found ourselves awaking as from a dream. The fire was out, the pipes were out; and we withdrew, dismally, to bed. All night I lay and dreamt of fights, and scuffles, and chases after bloodhounds in darksome forests. I awoke, and what a morning sun was glancing and dancing through the curtains! I sprang to the window; and what a different scene to the forest of last night! My window opened over a charming garden, sloping down the hill, full of flowers, dews, and humming-bees. I saw the wide expanse of Sherwood Forest, looking, with its heathery hills, dark, yet beautiful. There seemed to hang over it the poetic spirit of a thousand years. The sun beamed and glittered over fresh woods, and down moorland dales, endeared to me by all the charms of early youth and early friendships.* Below, lay pond after pond, where the trout leaped after the may-fly, and scores of wild fowl skimming aloft, and then alighting, dashed the crystal water up in myriad drops of glittering silver. In the room below, the jolly face of Caleb Stirland, and the buxom, kindly, bailiff's wife, greeted us to a true country breakfast: and, in half an hour, we were

* While this is going through the press, I deeply lament to see that this fine old remnant of forest—the region of Robin Hood and of a thousand associations with past ages—is going to be enclosed.

careering in our jolly friend's chaise, through the fresh, forest air, towards Nottingham.

It will be seen that Caleb Stirland is one of a numerous class in this country whom mischievous institutions place in a false position. Full himself of the finest elements of the true British character—good-hearted, generous, fond of fun, and disposed to live and let live; hospitable to his friends, benevolent and tender to the poor—yet, as the bailiff of a great landed proprietor, all his views and hopes in life are bound up with a zealous discharge of his duties. From a lad educated—as far as he was educated in anything, for he was originally but a poor wood-cutter's son—in these particular views of things he is a zealot for the preservation of landed, game, and other manorial rights; and, on this account, looks on all the working class with suspicion. To him they are so many polecats and weazels that want to destroy game, and he would rid himself of them with as little mercy. Hence his particular dislike to Sutton-in-Ashfield, which consists almost exclusively of the working classes—a population which has been much neglected, but which is now doing much to educate and improve itself. To set such men as Caleb Stirland right, we must set right the institutions of the country, and, first and foremost, abolish the Game Laws.

A FOREST REVERIE.

Up! to the forest hie!
 Summer is in its prime!
 'Tis glorious now to lie
 In the glades of heath and thyme.
 The bees are there before us,
 Hanging in many a flower;
 Let us list their joyous chorus,
 Through the basking noontide hour.
 Let us see the golden sun
 Amid the wood-boughs run,
 As the gales go freshly by
 Through the blue, blue summer sky;

Let us hear again the tune—
 The chiming sound
 That floats around—
 The woodland hum of noon!

I scent the ancient sward!
 I feel it 'neath my tread!
 The moss, the wiry nard,
 And the harebells bend their head!
 I see the foxgloves glow
 Where plough did never go;
 And the streams, the streams once more,
 Hurrying brightly o'er
 Their sandy beds; they roll
 With the joy of a living soul.
 Ye know that wood-walk sweet,
 Where we are wont to meet;
 On either hand the knolls and swells
 Are crimson with the heather-bells;
 And the eye sees,
 'Mid distant trees,
 Where moorland beauty dwells.

There let us haste again!
 For what has life beside,
 Like spirits young and fain
 In the open summer-tide!
 Come all! come all! we'll taste
 Our dearest joys anew;
 Come to the hoary waste,
 Ye spirits loved and true!
 There will we advance
 Through dales of old romance,
 And breathe, 'mid woods and streams,
 Our own poetic dreams;
 For generous, young, and fair,
 No world's weight do ye bear;
 Not its madness;
 Nor its sadness;
 Nor soul-estranging care.

Come! in the sun-bright sky,
 'Mid mountain-clouds we'll trace
 A spirit-land where lie
 Some fair ethereal race.
 Or in our coming years
 We'll dream of fame and love,
 And robe this vale of tears
 In the hues of heaven above.

Our life shall seem to run
 A flower-track in the sun.
 The poet's wreath—the patriot's heart—
 These shall be our nobler part.
 So have we dreamed—and here
 These thoughts shall reappear.
 A summer day
 Thus cast away,
 In memory shall be dear.

Oh! foolish, foolish heart!
 Can thus a thought betray?
 Thus unto thee impart
 The glory passed away?
 Summer is in the forest;
 The bee hangs in the bell;
 The oaks—the oldest, hoarest—
 On the ferny-slopes stand well.
 Sweetly the crimson heath-flower blows;
 Sweetly the living water flows;
 But these glad souls are gone—
 I! I am left alone!
 One and all! Oh! one and all!
 Those souls are gone beyond recall!
 Some are dead,
 And some are fled—
 And I—am the sad world's thrall!

I stand upon this height—
 I see those wild haunts dear;
 And say,—“Amid this blight,
 What dost thou lingering here?”
 A mystery dim and cold
 Is opening on my heart;
 I know how feel the old—
 For the young I have seen depart.
 Oh! fair is earth!—'tis clad
 In our own affections glad:
 Bounding heart, and glowing brain,
 Lead us on through wood and plain.
 Still, “Oh! beautiful!” we cry—
 For the loving souls are nigh.
 In after years
 We come in tears,
 And the beauty has gone by!*

* These verses are set to music by Barnett. The music is copyright.



SEPTEMBER.

AUTUMN is stealing on us. The great, long, and sultry heats are past. Rain has refreshed the air and the parched earth, and given a new verdure to the pastures, where the cattle in thousands, admitted to fields and meadows that have been for some time cleared of their hay, present in their well-fed beauty scenes of peaceful animal life and plenty, that do us good to look on. The air, which seemed to slumber for weeks in an electric sleep, now awakes, and begins to shake the thick leafy masses of the trees, and, with a refreshing voice, to sing its rushing song of health

and enjoyment. The shadows of the year begin to fall upon us; a gloom, pleasant and soothing, after the glare of past days, hangs in the air; and in morning and evening there are a coolness, a moisture, a peculiar sensation, that make us feel, in every sense, that it is once more autumn.

Again the veil of clouds is drawn away by the hands of the high soaring winds, and through the sky are trailed, in their airy lengths, their gossamer drapery, amid the intense azure of the lofty immensity; and the sun comes up once more to brilliant days of the calmest and most impressive beauty.

And beneath this sun the children of men, scattered over the nations, are out on field and hill, gathering, with songs and joy, the annual abundance of God. Woe to those who shall gaze on this abundance, and think not on the good, the comfort, and the happiness, which it shall minister to millions of human creatures sent hither to learn the first rudiments of life—the first steps in the eternal pilgrimage—the first need of leaning on each other and on God; but who, with a sordid feeling, worthy of a worse than brute nature, shall think only how much of this good they can, by speculative cunning, heap around themselves, though it be at the cost of the peace and the lives of thousands. Such men are the Gouls and the Afrits of these times: they lie concealed in their dens of corruption, and pull down the unsuspecting as they pass, and devour them: they are what the plague was formerly, the constantly-recurring scourge of society; they walk about in the garb of honourable men, and are, nevertheless, the worst demons which “go about seeking whom they may devour.” But their hour cometh now and then. In 1848, how the speculators in corn were crushed like so many moths. Man was too corrupt and effeminate

to denounce them, but God put forth his finger and destroyed them. Clearly as when he lured the callous-hearted Egyptians into the Red Sea, and then brought all his waves over them, did God whelm the grinders of the face of the poor in gulfs of their own devices.

First came rains—long and deluging rains—and mid-summer frosts, which injured corn and destroyed potatoes, and broke down the Corn Law; and then came an abundance that caught the men grown blind in the brightness of their own successes, and they were crushed like worms beneath the weight of sheaves and the piles of abundance raised on the earth by a gloriously-avenging God, from end to end of the world. They fell with their hundreds and thousands of pounds—with all their bulwarks of money-bags, and no man pitied them. May the lesson be an eternal one! for a race of speculators in the bread of man is a curse, whether they stand or fall. Their standing is starvation, and their fall is ruin.

Shall crime bring crime for ever,
 Strength aiding still the strong?
 Is it thy will, oh, Father,
 That man should toil for wrong?
 "No!" say the mountains; "No!" thy skies:
 "Man's clouded sun shall brightly rise,
 And songs be heard instead of sighs."

EBENEZER ELLIOTT.

Let us leave the obstructors of good to their eternal ignominy, and walk out into the midst of that plenty which they no longer can intercept.

On all sides there is joy, and gathering in of stores. It is the month of boundless abundance. Corn, and hops, and fruits of all kinds, are soliciting the hand of man. The trees are beginning to change colour, indicative of ripeness in their produce, and the orchards are affluent in pears, plums, and apples. The hedges are filled with the

abundance of their wild crops; crabs; black, glossy clusters of privet; buckthorn; elderberries, which furnish the farmer with a cordial cup on his return from market on a winter's eve; and blackberries, reminding us of the Babes in the Wood. The hedgerows are brightened also with a profusion of scarlet berries, of hips, haws, honeysuckles, viburnum, and briony. The fruit of the mountain-ash, woody nightshade, and wild service, is truly beautiful; nor are the violet-hued sloes and bullaces, or the crimson mossy excrescences of the wild-rose tree, insignificant objects amid the autumnal splendours of the fading year.

Notwithstanding the decrease of the day, the weather of this month is, for the most part, splendidly calm; and Nature, who knows the most favourable time to display all her works, has now instructed the geometric spider to form its radiated circle on every bush, and the gossamer spider to hang its silken threads on every blade of grass. The sportsman is abroad amid the stubbles and the heathy hills; and thousands of people, from city and town, are climbing the mountains, or strolling along the breezy shores, warned by the shortening days to enjoy themselves while they may. The poet and the contemplative man never feel the country more delightful than at this season. The woods and trees are thick and shadowy; the deep green on them and on the grass contrasts with corn and stubble-fields, and the tints that begin to break out, here and there, are splendid warnings of the waning year.

There is a solemn and calm mood in nature, that induces the same in the human mind; and the thoughtful spirit now finds on the seashore, by the forest side, along the banks of the rushing river, or across rich stretches of meadows, bounded by the sight of luxuriant hedges, soft willow plots, the smoke of hamlets, and the points of village-spires rising above the distant woodlands, enjoy-

ments deep, tender, and delicious. Every object speaks of the season that is, and that is coming, when rains and floods shall chase us away from the field to the fireside. The flower amid the meadow-grass is the autumnal crocus: in the woods the splendour of the fungi is astonishing; these are of every size, shape, and hue, according to species and situation, from the slender scarlet, or bright yellow filament upon some decaying stump, or the bold broad agaric of a foot in diameter, standing in the forest as a fitting table for King Oberon. Some are broad, tubular, and flecked with brown; some, in the shade of trees, of a pearly whiteness; others of a brilliant rose-colour; some, whose delicate surfaces are studded with dark embossments; some fashioned like a Chinese parasol; others, gibbous and grotesque; the massy puff-ball which, before it becomes dry, has been known to weigh several pounds; the pestilent, scented, and ginger-mushrooms, for all the world like Simnel cakes; and out in the old meadows, the snowy mushrooms are springing hour by hour.

Amongst the most striking signs of the season this month are the arrivals of birds that winter here, and the departure of numbers that come to enliven our summer. Curlews, sandpipers, snipes, the beangoose, the fieldfare, and the Norway thrush, arrive: and fern-owls, dottrels, swallows, some kinds of plovers, fly-catchers, whitethroats, warblers, red-sparrows, wheatears, and many others, bid us good-bye till next April or so. In the garden we see autumnal crocuses, autumnal snowflakes, meadow saffron, groundsels, asters, and chrysanthemums. They all nod to us in a solemn beauty as the last of those gaudy little actors who have played out the gay pantomime of the summer garden.

But all is not sombre and meditative in September. The hop-field and the nut-wood are often scenes of much

jolly old English humour and enjoyment. In Kent and Sussex the whole country is odorous with the aroma of hop, as it is breathed from the drying kilns and huge wagons filled with towering loads of hops, thronging the road to London. But not only is the atmosphere abroad perfumed with hops, but the very atmosphere of the drawing-room and dining-room too. Hops are the grand flavour of conversation as well as of beer. Gentlemen, ladies, clergymen, noblemen, all are growers of hops, and deeply interested in the state of the crop and the market. But of all places at this season give me the nut-wood, and the old umbrageous lane, with its tall hazel thickets and hedges. How many delightful days spent in these places with young hearts and congenial souls come back upon the memory! The set out *à la gipsy* in a common cart; the ride through the fresh, clear air, with mirth and laughter; the arrival in the wood or thicket; the rushing away to pull down the brown clusters with some dear companion; the meeting to show plunder and take dinner on the grass by the clear brook, or the adjournment to tea at the village inn — what pleasures of our city and artificial life are worth one day of this description? It is the food of poetry for years. Alas! that the Game Laws should have thrown their baneful interdict on even the pleasures of nutting! Alas! that in thousands of woods and woodland places throughout the kingdom, the nuts should fall and rot by thousands of bushels, lest pheasants should be disturbed! Yet so it is, and amid much oppression that it occasions, there are sometimes scenes ludicrous enough occurring from it, with one of which I will close this article.

My brother, Doctor Godfrey Howitt, and myself, once passing a solitary farm-house, at a place called Hart's Well, near Oxtou, in Nottinghamshire, belonging to Sir John Sherbrooke, saw a huge man thatching a stack in the

yard. Somewhat farther on we passed a gate leading into a small wood, and saw an immense quantity of nuts hanging just within the wood. We passed the gate, and were gathering some of these, when suddenly there seemed to come an elephant, tramping and crashing through the wood; and presently, the huge country-fellow, hot with his chase, leapt forth from the underwoods, exclaiming—“That is not allowed, gentlemen! That is not allowed! Nobody is allowed to nut here: I must take your names to Sir John.”

The man had observed us from the top of his rick turn into the wood; and desperate must have been his run, for he was red as a lobster, and puffed like a grampus.

“I must take your names,” repeated he, as soon as he could catch his breath.

And I said, coolly, “Very well; then take out your book.”

“I have no book,” replied the man; “but I can carry them in my head till I get into the house.”

“Your head, my friend, is certainly a very capacious one,” I replied, “but these our names are very uncommon ones,—you will never remember them properly; few people ever do.”

“Well, I’ll be bound to remember them,” said the man, “let them be as queer as they may.”

“You won’t remember them rightly, I tell you, but that is your concern. Mark, then: my name is Don Quixote, and that gentleman’s is Sancho Panza.”

“I wish it may be true,” said the fellow, in a good deal of astonishment.

“Well, repeat them now, my friend, and we shall see whether you have them right.”

“ Oh, I’ve got ’em right enough, I warrant ye ; your’n is Dan Quicksett, and this gentleman’s is Francis Tansey.”

“ Well, that is famous !” we exclaimed ; “ mind you keep them right till you put them down in your book at home.”

And so we bade him good-day ; hastening off as fast as we could to give vent, at a proper distance, to our laughter, which was getting too much to hold ; and not daring more than once to look back at the great huge fellow who stood gazing solemnly after us, with his straw hat taken off, and wiping his reeking brow on his shirt-sleeve. He nodded as we gave this single, retrospective glance, at some yards’ distance, with another quiet, but dubious, “ I wish it may be true !” and the look we dared not repeat—it was too ludicrous. Issuing out of the valley upon the neighbouring forest of Sherwood, we gave vent to our pent-up mirth, and only regretted that we had not written down our assumed names, that Sir John Sherbrooke might have enjoyed the surprise of finding two such old friends from a foreign country set down amid the trespassers on his woods.

MICHAELMAS—A HOLIDAY.

There have been merry times at Michaelmas—who would believe it ? Yet there *have* been merry times at Michaelmas. Mayors and aldermen were then elected, and made their bows to each other ; and be sure there were merry doings when mayors and aldermen were in the case. Stubble geese, like the aldermen, were now in prime condition ; but being the weaker, according to the proverb, went to the wall, and thence to the kitchen, and twirled upon the spit. It was a jolly day in old Mother Church ; she ordered everybody that could get it to

eat a goose in honour of St. Michael and all the angels; we may suppose because *they* were not such geese as to quarrel with their comforts in heaven at the suggestion of Lucifer. So in church and corporation, in abbey and town-hall, in farm and cottage, there was a universal eating of fat geese; and nobody that I ever heard of complained of the injunction. Queen Elizabeth was eating her goose at the time that the news of the defeat of the Spanish Armada was brought to her; and no doubt she thought the Spaniards great and very green geese for having come there, and that they would be much greener if they ever came again. Ever after Queen Bess most assiduously ate her goose at Michaelmas, and, probably, with Spanish chestnuts, as people on the continent do now; or if she did not, she would not have repented it if she had, for it is a princely addition. Queen Bess ate her goose all the more assiduously because it was an old saying, that if you ate your goose at Michaelmas, you would have plenty of money all the year round,—a prescription so pleasant, that if its efficacy were at all proportioned to its agreeableness, people would be geese, indeed, not to comply with. How, indeed, could any one desire a pleasanter way of replenishing a purse? Queen Bess was always dreadfully in want of money, however; and as this came to be seen, and not the less to be felt by those who had the taxes to pay, and as no more armadas came to be defeated, people lost all faith in eating roast goose, except the comfortable faith that Robert Southey had when he addressed one in a sonnet, and asking the goose where it could have been so bravely fed, and receiving no answer, added of himself:—

But *this* I know, that thou art very fine
Seasoned with sage, with onions, and port wine.

Jolly times, then, it is clear there have been at Michael-

mas. Into these, except in the city of London, there has been made a dreadful inroad by the Municipal Corporation Reform Act, which forbade all eating of Michaelmas goose in a corporate capacity. Driven out of convents and corporations, yet I imagine roast goose at Michaelmas finds a welcome reception in many a farm, gentleman's, and other private house. Roast pigs no longer run about with oranges in their mouths, crying, "Come, eat me!" but stubble geese really do seem to meet you at every turn, and cackle out invitingly that pathetic request. At markets and poulterers they crowd upon you; in lanes and on commons they nibble at your heels, and hiss to inform you that they are fat and foolish, and beg you to introduce them to a *sage*. They stand in flocks at stubble-field gates, and look imploringly; everywhere you are called on to note that they are no longer green, but have grown grey and corpulent, and have but one earthly desire left, and that is—to be done brown. There is no resisting this. The Michaelmas goose will find a warm reception wherever it goes, to the end of the world.

But I much fear me that there are many houses where this portly visitor finds the door too narrow to get in. Some way, Catholicism having so long gone out of fashion in England, we have forgotten many of its sensible customs. Michaelmas has ceased to be anything of a holiday, except to landlords. A holiday! mercy on us! why, it is a rent-day! All may lighten their purses, but that is a process with thousands, which does not much lighten the heart. It is quarter-day—

At length the jolly time begins,
"Come neighbours, we must wag;"
The money chinks, down drop their chins,
Each lugging out his bag.

Out upon Michaelmas for a holiday—why, it is only a

landlord's holiday! The landlords are the jolly fellows, in these Protestant times, that glean the stubbles, and catch all the fat geese. We are the geese to be plucked, and, perhaps, get a roasting. Oh! you lucky fellows that can keep holiday at Michaelmas! Heaven send us all to be landlords as soon as possible, and fill our purses the whole year round by devouring stubble geese—*alias*, farmers. At Michaelmas, the landlord is plucking geese all day long, and the deuce a bit does he weary with it. If you pay quarterly, you pay at Michaelmas; if you pay only once a year, you still pay at Michaelmas. Then is the time for plucking and roasting. It is a solemn, sober, dreary, melancholy sort of time—is Michaelmas, for everybody but landlords. There is laughter to be sure, but the laughter is the landlord's. You may tell it by the sound, without seeing where it comes from. It is a thick, mellow, fat-sided sort of laughter. It is not a tenant's laughter, nor anything like it. There are geese roasting in plenty, but then—they are roasting in landlords' kitchens.

And yet there *have* been jolly times, and Protestant times too, even at Michaelmas. Nothing in this degenerating world has degenerated so much as Michaelmas. Landlords once had bowels. They knew how unpleasant is the operation of drawing a rent to the patient, pretty much like that of drawing a tooth—and they did their best to make it more toothsome. They gilded the pill—they sweetened the physic—they roasted stubble geese for their tenants as well as themselves.

Nobody now-a-days, if their fathers had not told them, could have any idea how easily Michaelmas once was made to go over. It once was a gay day, spite of its being a pay day. I remember when a boy how many were our rent-nights. The supper-table at my father's was set out in the large old-fashioned dining-room, and in came one

bright face after another, as if the thing, money, had not brought it there. We six lads were allowed to sit up on those nights later than usual, and to sit down with the whole rustic group. Never did any hours flow more magically than those. There were assembled, the wits, the humorists, the historians, the rural patriarchs of the neighbourhood; and the whole country round, its doings, and its characters and traditions, passed in review. At one end of the table sate the stately form of the landlord, radiant with the mirth of the present, and the remembrance of the past: at the other, the mild and maternal grace of one of the best and noblest of women, who thought, felt, and lived for every creature within the reach of her untiring sympathies. What knowledge of humble life have I gleaned at these times! How entirely in memory do they seem to have belonged to some better and more patriarchal age! How cold and formal do we seem now to have grown! Landlord and tenant do not know each other. Our acquaintance is with agents. We take premises and never see from whom—we quit them, and never wish to see. We draw a cheque for the rent, and do not even catch a glimpse of the landlord's hand in a receipt, for the presentation at the bank makes that unnecessary. Thousands pay to agents and receivers; tens of thousands are waited on duly with book and receipt. To the poor, even quarter-day is abolished, or rather it is always quarter-day with them, for they pay weekly. There are courts and alleys innumerable, called by the significant name of RENTS. Farrer's Rents; Spongem's Rents; Mawworm's Rents; Fingerit's Rents: the term is emphatic; it shows the only ideas of the possessors. To them, they are not human habitations; they present to their minds no images of human and domestic life;

they awake no sympathies nor speculations on what passes

In huts where poor men lie;

they are merely so many man-traps to catch the paying animal in ; they are machines for manufacturing rent.

In all our social improvements shall we ever improve on this state of things? Will all our teachings and preachings ever draw us nearer together? Will civilisation and Christianity ever put a bridge of sympathy over the huge gulf between landlord and tenant, between grade and grade? Instead of *iron bridges* and *chain bridges*, which our science has raised, will our humanity ever throw a rainbow-arch of soft brotherly affection from one craggy point to another of human existence? Thanks be to God they will! The signs are upon us and about us a thousand-fold. "The winter of our discontent" is not over, but it is rapidly passing. The buds and early blossoms of the spring of a Christian civilisation, at whose root lies love, and on whose crown there shall rise harmony and abundance, are breaking with unmistakable certainty. Every day puts forth some new shoot of hope, some germ of accomplishment. The colossal statue of humanity is fast being dug out of the desert sands of ignorance, imposition, and contempt, which had drifted over it through truly dark ages. We see from day to day, the spades of industrious knowledge lay bare some new portion of the ancient right, some glorious members of the social frame, some divine feature of popular beauty. Already the head and shoulders, the arms of power, and the hands of subtlest skill, are set free from their earthy concealment. The form of man, august and godlike, is at least half revealed. It stands once more awful in its majesty, calmly sublime in its intellectual grace, before

the face of heaven and men. The sun of Truth shines on it; the winds of Freedom fan it; the terrors of the future seize on corruption, and the awakened people gaze with reverent dread on the restored image of themselves.

Where are now the epithets of the great unwashed; the rascal rabble; the swinish multitude? Where are the minions of usurped power: the chains, the dungeons, the uplifted axe streaming with patriot blood? What advocate of popular right is now borne through the Traitor's Gate? Where are the Peterloos of infamy? Thick and fast fall the ramparts of barbarity and injustice. Instead of these shameful evidences of a distorted social condition, the great voice of the time is, that reforms must go on; trade must be freed; Ireland must be regenerated; the lash must be laid aside; education must be extended to every human creature; and the general state of the poor must be amended. While the talk is of education, the people are educating themselves. They have their own schools, ay, and colleges. They—the multitude—are studying Greek and Latin, mathematics and designing, and, best of all, the science of their own rights and interests. Those dens of crime and disease, the Spitalfields and St. Giles's of the metropolis, have been explored by the benevolent, and baths and washhouses, refuges for the destitute and cheerful homes for the industrious artizans, and other purifying and sanitary measures, are in active operation. Lately, I went with Fredrika Bremer through the Metropolitan Buildings for the working classes, where the philanthropic Swedish authoress, on her way to examine the institutions of the New World, saw a new world arising in the heart of an old one, and happy men and their families, with their birds, and books, and flowers, enjoying, from their ordinary wages, the refinements as well as the substantials of life. Not long ago I entered

the cottage of a young chairmaker in Birmingham, and found him nursing his children and reading at the same time Goethe's *Faust*, as it was reared upright on his table.

The revelations of the Andover Union have shattered the stony heart of the anti-Christian Poor Law; parks are opened for the people in London, in the dense spinnery of Manchester, and other large towns. Capital punishments are threatened with speedy abolition. Thousands of earnest-hearted men are engaged in chasing down slavery, intemperance, injustice to woman, war, and other great scourges and retarders of our upward progress. It is their thought by night, their eager pursuit by day. Thus far the derided "march of intellect" is on its way. It can never turn back; it can never be impeded: as soon shall ye turn back the sun. The millenium of mind is advancing. The words of Burns are growing into things—"Come it will for a' that—"

The pith o' sense, and pride o' worth,
Are higher ranks than a' that.

These are the natural fruits of science and general education, that are as certain as life itself. We may rest assured by all that has been done, and is now doing, that

The groans of Nature in this lower world,
Which Heaven has heard for ages, have an end.
Foretold by prophets, and by poets sung,
Whose fire was kindled at the prophet's lamp,
The time of rest, the promised Sabbath comes.
Six thousand years of sorrow have well-nigh
Fulfilled their tardy and disastrous course
Over a sinful world: and what remains
Of this tempestuous state of human things
Is merely as the working of the sea
Before a calm, that rocks itself to rest.

COWPER.

With an animating voice of the future in our hearts,
what are now the holiday pleasures that we can snatch for

the moment? Let us all, that can, get away into the country. The hop-pickers are at work in the lovely fields of Kent and other counties. Lively and picturesque groups are gathered together beneath the luxurious bines. There is no need for us to envy the vineyards and the vineyard scenes of the continent. There are none of them which surpass the beautiful scenes and the merry groups of our hop-grounds. The tall and luxuriant hops, with their vine-like leaves, and their hanging clusters of flowers, standing in green masses on fair slopes, or borne in triumph by laughing children to the bins, are objects of rural beauty, full of happy and poetical suggestions.

The shortening day warns us that we must make haste to enjoy the beauties of nature. Yet glorious is nature at this moment. The birds are silent; there is a solemn hush over the landscape that inspires a thoughtful mood. But the sun beams gladly on the woods and fields that smile back upon him, as in an old and confiding affection. The blackberries hang thick on the hedges; the mushroom springs white and fresh in the green pasture; the geometric spider hangs its web on bush and tree. Never does the landscape look more attractive than now. The grass in the fields is of the deepest green; the corn is cleared from the uplands; the woods look dreamy; the streams run on in freshest brilliancy; the air is full of vigour and inspiration. You are no longer languid, and oppressed with electric heat; you feel as if you must run and leap, think and love. You want hearts tuned to the joy of *your* hearts; minds overflowing with thought; you breathe in poetry, you pour out eloquence. Such is the soul of nature in the manhood of autumn. The true holiday now is to enjoy it. The vans which pour daily out of London set you the true example.

With their looped-up curtains, their streaming ribands,

their bright colours, on they go in trains of ten and twenty, filled with happy people. Sometimes whole troops of school-boys or school-girls fill them, who sing altogether as they go out of the great Babel into free nature. Sometimes they are servants, youths, and maidens, who have subscribed their penny a week to the association to which they belong for these rural expeditions. Sometimes they are young people of another class, mixed with husbands and wives, and even little children. They are all bound for Hampton Court, and Bushy Park, or the still more favourite haunt of Epping Forest. They have music. It plays as they go, and they sing as they go. When the music is not heard, or the singing, there is a merry clatter of voices, of laughter, and jokes. What lords and princes are half so happy? Away they stream, van after van, with their sumpter wagon, well stored, trotting on behind. All doors are crowded as they pass, to catch a glimpse of so much human happiness. Behind them lies the great brick-and-mortar wilderness, with all its labours and cares; before them, for one long day, the green forest. Anon, they pour into it. They drive up to some well-known public-house. They descend; form into knots of twos, threes, and half-dozens, or scores, and away into the woods. Then, it were a long story to describe all their wonderings, peerings, wanderings, exclamations, leaping over bushes, slinging at boles of trees, chasing of squirrels, fun, and laughter. Some soon seat themselves in the shade; some tender souls stroll on through shady and mossy-winding ways, lost in one another. But the time for dinner is come, and is not forgotten. There it is, spread under a great tree; and round gather the throng, and there is much mirth over getting seated. And then for the clatter of knives and forks, the popping of porter and ginger-beer bottles, and foaming of Bass's pale ale. After dinner, pipes

and cigars are lit, and the smoke curls up among the green boughs, with a true holiday curl. Talk, and laughter, and jokes abound. After a while there is a challenge for a leaping match, another for a race. The music plays, the day rolls on, and it is time to go. With green boughs, stripped vigorously, and somewhat riotously, from many a tree, they dress and adorn their several vans, ascend, and away. If they sing in coming, they sing tenfold in going back. All sing—men and women—every heart is elate; with a humming, chiming, sonorous sound, as of so many great cages full of singing-birds, they roll back into the great engulfing city.

If any one were to ask me for a pattern for a holiday, I would answer—there you have it. Send a company of congenial people into a forest on a fine September day, and be sure they will make a holiday of it; but for those who yearn after a longer flight, we must look into our next chapter.

AUTUMNAL EXCURSIONS.

The great feature of the season in autumn is the universal movement of all who can. There is as complete a migration amongst the human species as amongst any species of bird. In autumn, offices, warehouses, parliament houses, courts of law—all are deserted by all that can desert them, and there is a rapid flying and steaming over land and sea. It is not merely so in this business-wearied country, but everywhere else. The whole German population at this season is in a state of transit. Every one must have his or her "Herbst Lust-Reise;" and nothing can be more rational or more refreshing. We have said to all those who can get out of town into wood and forest, do so; and we say again, to all who

can make a longer flight, do so. France, Belgium, Germany, Italy, Sweden, Norway, all open their arms to receive the autumnal traveller. Steam-engines are hissing at wharf and station to convey you away, and a few weeks spent, even in the quietest manner, in scenes that are entirely new to you, are a refreshment for years. To show how much this may be the case, and at what small expense of cash or exertion, I shall give in this month and the next two specimens of such foreign excursions into primitive regions, as the most appropriate subjects of the season.

A FIVE DAYS' TOUR IN THE ODENWALD.

The Odenwald, or Forest of Odin, is one of the most primitive districts of Germany. It consists of a hilly, rather than a mountainous district, of some forty miles in one direction, and thirty in another. The beautiful Neckar bounds it on the south; on the west it is terminated by the sudden descent of its hills into the great Rhine plain. This boundary is well known by the name of the Bergstrasse, or mountain road; which road, however, was at the foot of the mountains, and not over them, as the name would seem to imply. To English travellers, the beauty of this Bergstrasse is familiar. The hills, continually broken into by openings into romantic valleys, slope rapidly down to the plain, covered with picturesque vineyards; and at their feet lie antique villages, and the richly-cultivated plains of the Rhine, here thirty or forty miles wide. On almost every steep and projecting hill, or precipitous cliff, stands a ruined castle, each, as throughout Germany, with its wild history, its wilder traditions, and local associations of a hundred kinds. The railroad from Frankfort to Heidelberg now runs along the Bergstrasse,

and will ever present to the eyes of travellers the charming aspect of these old legendary hills; till the enchanting valley of the Neckar, with Heidelberg reposing amid its lovely scenery at its mouth, terminates the Bergstrasse, and the hills which stretch onward, on the way towards Carlsruhe, assume another name.

Every one ascending the Rhine from Mayence to Mannheim has been struck with the beauty of these Odenwald hills, and has stood watching that tall white tower on the summit of one of them, which, with windings of the river, seem now brought near, and then again thrown very far off; seemed to watch and haunt you, and, for many hours, to take short cuts to meet you, till, at length, like a giant disappointed of his prey, it glided away into the grey distance, and was lost in the clouds. This is the tower of Melibocus, above the village of Auerbach, to which we shall presently ascend, in order to take our first survey of this old and secluded haunt of Odin.

This quiet region of hidden valleys and deep forests extends from the borders of the Black Forest, which commences on the other side of the Neckar, to the Spessart, another old German forest; and in the other direction, from Heidelberg and Darmstadt, towards Heilbronn. It is full of ancient castles, and a world of legends. In it stands, besides the Melibocus, another tower, on a still loftier point, called the Katzenbuckel, which overlooks a vast extent of these forest hills. Near this lies Eberbach, a castle of the descendants of Charlemagne, which we shall visit; the scenes of the legend of the Wild Huntsman; the castles of Götz von Berlichingen, and many another spot familiar by its fame to our minds from childhood. But besides this, the inhabitants are a people living in a world of their own; retaining all the simplicity of their abodes and habits; and it is only in such

a region that you now recognise the pictures of German life such as you find them in the *Haus Märchen* of the brothers Grimm.

In order to make ourselves somewhat acquainted with this interesting district, Mrs. Howitt and myself, with knapsack on back, set out at the end of August, 1841, to make a few days' ramble on foot through it. The weather, however, proved so intensely hot, and the electrical sultriness of the woods so oppressive, that we only footed it one day, when we were compelled to make use of a carriage, much to our regret.

On the last day in August we drove with a party of friends, and our children, to Weinheim; rambled through its vineyards, ascended to its ancient castle, and then went on to Birkenau Thal, a charming valley, celebrated, as its name denotes, for its lovely hanging birches, under which, with much happy mirth, we dined.

Scrambling amongst the hills, and winding up the dry footpaths, amongst the vineyards of this neighbourhood, we were yet more delighted with the general beauty of the scenery, and with the wild flowers which everywhere adorned the hanging cliffs and warm waysides. The marjorum stood in ruddy and fragrant masses; harebells and campanulas of several kinds, that are cultivated in our gardens, with bells large and clear; crimson pinks; the Michaelmas daisy; a plant with a thin, radiated yellow flower, of the character of an aster; a centaurea of a light purple, handsomer than any English one; a thistle in the driest places, resembling an eryngo, with a thick, bushy top; mulleins, yellow and white; the wild mignonette, and the white convolvulus; and clematis festooning the bushes, recalled the flowery fields and lanes of England, and yet told us that we were not there. The meadows had also their moist emerald sward scattered with the grass

of Parnassus, and an autumnal crocus of a particularly delicate lilac.

At the inn, at the mouth of Birkenau Thal, we proposed to take the eilwagen, as far as Auerbach, but that not arriving, we availed ourselves of a peasant's light wicker wagon. The owner was a merry fellow, and had a particularly spirited black horse; and taking leave of our friends, after a delightful day, we had a most charming drive to Auerbach, and one equally amusing, from the conversation of our driver.

After tea we ascended to Auerbach Castle, which occupies a hill above the town, still far overtopped, however, by the height of Melibocus. The view was glorious. The sunset across the great Rhine plain was magnificent. It diffused over the whole western sky an atmosphere of intense crimson light, with scattered golden clouds, and surrounded by a deep violet splendour. The extremities of the plain, from the eye being dazzled with this central effulgence, lay in a solemn and nearly impenetrable gloom. The castle in ruins, seen by this light, looked peculiarly beautiful and impressive. In the *court*, on the wall, was an inscription, purporting that a society, in honour of the military career of the Grand Duke of Hesse-Darmstadt, in whose territory and in that of Baden the Odenwald chiefly lies, had here celebrated his birthday in the preceding July. Round the inscription hung oaken garlands, within each of which was written the name and date of the battles in which he had been engaged against the French. An altar of moss and stones stood at a few yards' distance in front of these memorials, at which a peasant, living in the tower, told us, the field-preacher had delivered an oration on the occasion.

In the morning, at five o'clock, we began to ascend the neighbouring heights of Melibocus. It took us an

hour and a quarter. The guide carried my knapsack; and as we went, men came up through different foot-paths in the woods, with hoes on their shoulders. When we arrived on the top, we found others, and amongst them some women, accompanied by a policeman. They were peasants who had been convicted of cutting wood for fuel in the hills, and were adjudged to pay a penalty, or, in default, to work it out in hoeing and clearing the young plantations for a proportionate time—a much wiser way than shutting them up in a prison, where they are of no use either to themselves or the state.

The view from the tower, eighty feet in height, over the great Rhine plain, is immense and splendid, including two hundred villages, towns, and cities. The windings of the magnificent Rhine lie mapped out below you, and on its banks are seen, as objects of peculiar interest, the cathedral of Speier, the lofty dome of the Jesuits' church at Mannheim, and the four towers of the noble cathedral of Worms. In the remote distance, as a fitting termination to this noble landscape, are seen the heights of the Donnersberg, the Vosges, and the Schwarzwald. The policeman, who followed us up into the tower, mentioned the time when the inhabitants of that district had hastened thither to watch the approach of the French armies, and pointed out the spot where they were first seen, and described their approach, and the terrors and anxieties of the people, in the most lively and touching manner.

The wind was strong on this lofty height, and the rattling of the shutters in the look-out windows in the tower, and of their fastenings, would have been dismal enough on a stormy night, and gave quite a wildness to it even then. The view over the Odenwald was beautiful. Half covered with wood, as far as you could see, with green, winding straths between them, distant castles, and glimpses of the

white walls of low-lying dorfs or villages, it gave you an idea of a region at once solitary and attractive. The whole was filled with the cheerful light of morning, and the wooded hills looked of the most brilliant green. We descended, and pursued our way through the forest glades with that feeling of enjoyment which the entrance into an unknown region, pleasant companionship, and fine weather, inspire. When we issued from the woods which clothe the sides of Melibocus, we sate down on the heathy turf, and gazed with a feeling of ever-youthful delight on the scene around us. Above us, and over its woods, rose the square white tower of Melibocus; below, lay green valleys, from amongst whose orchards issued the smoke of peaceful cottages; and beyond, rose hills covered with other woods, with shrouded spots, the legends of which had reached us in England, and had excited the wonder of our early days—the castle of the Wild Huntsman—the traditions of the followers of Odin—and the strongholds of many an iron-clad knight, as free to seize the goods of his neighbours as he was strong to take and keep them. Now all was peaceful and Arcadian. We met, as we descended into the valley, young women coming up with their cows, and a shepherd with a mixed flock of sheep and swine. He had a belt around him, to which hung a chain, probably to fasten a cow to, as we afterwards saw cows so secured.

We found the cottages, in the depths of the valleys, amongst their orchards, just those heavy, old-fashioned sort of things that we see in German engravings; buildings of wood-framing, the plaster panels of which were painted in various ways, and the windows of those circular and octagon panes which, from old association, always seem to belong to German cottages, just such as that in which the old witch lived in *Grimm's Kinder und Haus*

Märchen; and in the *Folk Sagor* of Sweden and Norway. There were, too, the large ovens built out of doors and roofed over, such as the old giantess, *Käringen som vardt stekt i ugnen*, was put into, according to German and Scandinavian legends. The people were of the simplest character and appearance. We seemed at once to have stepped out of modern times into the far-past ages. We saw several children sitting on a bench in the open air, near a school-house, learning their lessons, and writing on their slates; and we went into the school.

The schoolmaster was a man befitting the place; simple, rustic, and devout. He told us that the boys and girls, of which his school was full, came, some of them, from a considerable distance. They came in at six o'clock in the morning and stayed till eight, had an hour's rest, and then came in till eleven, when they went home, and did not return again till the next morning, being employed the rest of the day in helping their parents; in going into the woods for fuel; into the fields to glean, tend cattle, cut grass, or do what was wanted. All the barefooted children of every village, however remote, thus acquire a tolerable education, learning singing as a regular part of it. They have what they call their *Sing-Stunde*, singing lesson, every day. On a black board, the *Lied*, song, or hymn for the day, was written in German character in chalk; and the master, who was naturally anxious to exhibit the proficiency of his scholars, gave them their singing lesson while we were there. The scene was very interesting in itself; but there was something humiliating to our English minds, to think that in the Odenwald, a portion of the great Hyrcanian forest, a region associating itself with all that is wild and obscure, every child of every hamlet and cottage, however secluded, was provided with that instruction which the villages of England are in

a great measure yet destitute of. But here the peasants are not, as with us, totally cut off from property in the soil which they cultivate; totally dependent on the labour afforded by others; on the contrary, they are themselves the possessors. This country is, in fact, in the hands of the people. It is all parcelled out amongst the multitude; and, wherever you go, instead of the great halls, vast parks, and broad lands of the few, you see perpetual evidences of an agrarian system. Except the woods, the whole land is thrown into small allotments, and upon them the people are labouring busily for themselves.

Here, in the Odenwald, the harvest, which in the great Rhine plain was over in July, was now, in great measure, cut. Men, women, and children, were all engaged in cutting it, getting it in, or in tending the cattle. Everywhere stood the simple wagons of the country with their pair of yoked cows. Women were doing all sorts of work; reaping, and mowing, and threshing with the men. They were without shoes and stockings, clad in a simple, dark-blue petticoat; a body of the same, leaving the white chemise sleeves as a pleasing contrast; and their hair, in some instances, turned up under their little black or white caps; in others hanging wild and sunburnt on their shoulders. The women, old and young, work as hard as the men, at all kinds of work, and yet with right good-will, for they work for themselves. They often take their dinners with them to the fields, frequently giving the lesser children a piece of bread each, and locking them up in their cottages till they return. This would be thought a hard life in England; but hard as it is, it is better than the degradation of agricultural labourers, in a dear country like England, with six or eight shillings a week, and no cow, no pig, no fruit for the market, no house, garden, or field of their own; but, on the contrary,

constant anxiety, the fear of a master on whom they are constantly dependent, and the desolate prospect of ending their days in a union workhouse.

Each German has his house, his orchard, his road-side trees, so laden with fruit, that if he did not carefully prop up, and tie together, and in many places hold the boughs together with wooden clamps, they would be torn asunder by their own weight. He has his corn-plot, his plot for mangel-wurzel or hay, for potatoes, for hemp, etc. He is his own master, and he therefore, and every branch of his family, have the strongest motives for constant exertion. You see the effect of this in his industry and his economy.

In Germany, nothing is lost. The produce of the trees and the cows is carried to market. Much fruit is dried for winter use. You see wooden trays of plums, cherries, and sliced apples, lying in the sun to dry. You see strings of them hanging from their chamber windows in the sun. The cows are kept up for the greater part of the year, and every green thing is collected for them. Every little nook where the grass grows by road-side, and river, and brook, is carefully cut with the sickle, and carried home, on the heads of women and children, in baskets, or tied in large cloths. Nothing of any kind that can possibly be made of any use is lost. Weeds, nettles, nay, the very goose-grass which covers waste places, is cut up and taken for the cows. You see the little children standing in the streets of the villages, in the streams which generally run down them, busy washing these weeds before they are given to the cattle. They carefully collect the leaves of the marsh-grass, carefully cut their potato tops for them, and even, if other things fail, gather green leaves from the woodlands. One cannot help thinking continually of the enormous waste of such things in England—of the vast

quantities of grass on banks, by road-sides, in the openings of plantations, in lanes, in churchyards, where grass from year to year springs and dies, but which, if carefully cut, would maintain many thousand cows for the poor.

To pursue still further this subject of German economy. The very cuttings of the vines are dried and preserved for winter fodder. The tops and refuse of the hemp serve as bedding for the cows; nay, even the rough stalks of the poppies, after the heads have been gathered for oil, are saved, and all these are converted into manure for the land. When these are not sufficient, the children are sent into the woods to gather moss; and all our readers familiar with Germany will remember to have seen them coming homeward with large bundles of this on their heads. In autumn, the falling leaves are gathered and stocked for the same purpose. The fir-cones, which with us lie and rot in the woods, are carefully collected, and sold for lighting fires.

In short, the economy and care of the German peasant are an example to all Europe. He has for years—nay, ages—been doing that as it regards agricultural management to which the British public is but just now beginning to open its eyes. Time, also, is as carefully economised as everything else. They are early risers, as may well be conceived, when the children, many of whom come from considerable distances, are in school at six in the morning. As they tend their cattle, or their swine, the knitting never ceases, and hence the quantities of stockings, and other household things, which they accumulate, are astonishing.

We could not help, as often before, being struck in the Odenwald with the resemblance of the present country and life of the Germans to those of the ancient Hebrews. Germany, like Judea, is literally a land flowing with milk

and honey: a land of corn, and wine, and oil. The plains are full of corn; the hill-sides, however stony, are green with vineyards; and though they have not the olive, they procure vast quantities of oil from the walnut, the poppy, and the rape. The whole country is parcelled out amongst its people. There are no hedges, but the landmarks, against the removal of which the Jewish law so repeatedly and so emphatically denounces its terrors, alone indicate the boundaries of each man's possession. Everywhere you see the ox and the heifer toiling beneath the primitive yoke, as in the days of David. The threshing-floor of Araunah often comes to your mind when you see the different members of a family—father, mother, brother, and sister, all threshing out their corn together on the mud floor of their barn; but much more so when you see them, in the corn-field itself, collect the sheaves into one place, and treading down the earth into a solid floor, there, in the face of heaven and fanned by its winds, thresh out on the spot the corn which has been cut. This we saw continually going forward on the steep slopes of the Odenwald, ten or a dozen men and women all threshing together. A whole field is thus soon threshed, the corn being beaten out much more easily while the ear is crisp with the hot sun.

Having taken leave of the schoolmaster, his scholars, and his bees, with whose hives nearly all his house-side was covered, we pursued our way to the Jägerhaus on the top of the Felsberg, one of the highest hills in the Odenwald. The day was splendid, with a fine breeze, and all around was new, cheerful, yet solitary, bright and inspiring. The peasants in the harvest-fields, the herds watching their cattle, gave us a passing salutation, and when within sight of you, took off their hats, even at a field's distance. We walked on in great enjoyment, here sitting to look back

on the scenes we had left, or to drink from the glittering waters that we had to pass.

Just as we were about to enter the woods again, we met an old woman slowly wandering on from some cottages amongst the trees by the wood-side. She had a leathern belt round her waist, and a cord fastened to it, by which she led her cow to graze in the thickets and by the foot-path, while her hands were busy with her knitting. A boy, about seven years old, was leading a kid by a chain, letting it crop the flowers of the hawkweed in the grass. The old woman saluted us cheerfully; told us that the boy's father was in America, and his mother gone out to service, and that he was entrusted to her care. Could there be anything more like a scene in the old *Märchen*, or less like one in England?

THE SEA OF ROCKS, AND THE GIANT'S PILLAR.

The path through the beech woods led us up to the open summit of the hills, where stands the solitary Jägerhaus, or hunter's lodge, but with a splendid view over similar woody hills, and distant castles on their ridges. Nothing could be imagined more lonely and legendary than the aspect of this house, isolated amid its forest wilderness. In the woods beyond lies the celebrated *Felsen-meer*, or Sea of Rocks, and the *Riesensäule*, or Giant's Pillar, objects which are much visited, and which are well worth seeing. The wood, in fact, is on the slope of the hill, over which huge blocks of granite are scattered. In one steep hollow, these stupendous blocks are showered down, one on another, in a chaotic wildness, like the waves of a tempestuous ocean. The spot was just the one to attract the attention of the Druids;

and, accordingly, they appear to have been busy in preparing one of their large temples—as it is supposed, to Odin—at the time that they were interrupted, probably by the armies of Julius Cæsar. You find amid the solemn shadow of the woods the projecting blocks of granite, so cleared away in part, and in part so left, as to describe a rude circle, in the centre of which stands a monstrous mass, as large as a tolerable house, which constituted the altar. You see on some of the stones the marks of some rude carving, in the manner of a rude dental, as if for a frieze or cornice.

Not far from this earth-rooted and eternal temple, you come to where the Riesensäule lies. This is a colossal pillar of granite, of thirty-two feet long. The soil is dug away which formerly half buried it, and it lies in its gigantic greatness as in a grave. It is supposed to lie where it was hewn, and never to have been raised. To my eye, however, it lies where it has fallen, broken from its base, which still shows itself in the earth. It is an object which strikes you with awe and surprise at its ponderous greatness. Parallel with it appears, half buried in the earth, a large square block of granite, rudely carved in the manner of that at the Temple, and as if it had been intended for a cornice or frieze, to rest on the pillars.

The whole scene brought back strongly the gloomy superstitions of the Odenwald, ages before the Romans had planted here, by a severe discipline, agriculture and the arts.

A SCENE IN THE WOODS.

From this place we went, over hill and valley, towards Rodenstein, the scene of the legend of the Wild Huntsman. At noon we sat down under a large oak, on a wild

hill-side, scattered with a few such old trees, and with masses of rock. It was most intensely hot. I took off my knapsack, and we made a resting-place at the foot of the tree. Below us was an extensive prospect, and above us a beech-forest, stretching for miles. We were now not far distant from the abode of the Wild Hunter, and the country seemed just of the character for such an inhabitant. To reach Rodenstein, the remains of an ancient castle, it was necessary, however, to traverse these woods, and, when somewhat refreshed, we plunged into them with that intention. The church of the village of Neunkirchen had been pointed out to us at a distance, which we must pass, and towards this we endeavoured to steer our course through the woods. We found these, however, of great extent. All track soon vanished, and around us was only one deep and solemn shade—the lofty pillars of beech-boles, and the thick canopy of their heads. Below, the earth was brown with withered leaves, and scattered with great pieces of rock, covered with vivid-green moss. Here and there the presence of bogs was indicated by the pale green of the *noli-me-tangere* (touch-me-not), with its yellow flowers—a plant whose name gave a significant caution, for where it grew was treacherous footing. After half an hour's progress, though confident of going in the right direction, the scene was solemn and impressive. There was no outlet visible, but one interminable waste of shade and deep silence. We began almost to repent of having ventured through these unknown woods, when we heard the snapping of a dry stick, then a human voice, and in the far shade discerned an old woman, in the dark dress and cap of the country, with two children with her.

The old woman undertook to guide us through the wood. She and her two grandchildren went silently on,

here and there picking up a stick, and then gliding on again, beckoning us to follow, and to avoid the morasses. Through the deep shade, and the withered, rustling leaves, they went on and on, threading the morasses, striding from stone to stone, and silently beckoning us to follow. There appeared no bounds to the woods, and our silent, gliding conductor seemed for all the world like an Indian, guiding us out of the depths of an American forest. At length we caught a glimpse of light, and deemed that we were emerging from the wood, but it was only an opening, in which the sun blazed on the stones till they shone dazzling and white as snow. We had still to go on and on. Anon our conductor disappeared amongst the thickets, and we followed, tracing her through bogs, and amongst rocks and boughs, till at once we emerged into a croft, and with the village-church standing before us.

On offering our ancient guide a piece of money, with our heartiest thanks for her guidance, she shook her head, folded her hands, and said, "*Nein, dass can ich nicht. Der ist kein guter Christ, welcher einen Fremden nicht aus einem Walde helfen wollte.*" "He is no good Christian who would not help a stranger out of a wood." It was an instance of disinterestedness that we did not expect even in this out-of-the-world region—even in the heart of the Odenwald. But all our entreaties were in vain; she would only wish us "*eine glückselige Reise,*" a happy journey, and disappeared in the thicket, leaving us but just time to put the money into the hand of one of her grandchildren, who appeared more conformable in his desires to the wishes of the present generation.

At this dorf of Neunkirchen, we entered the public-house to get a pint of wine and some rest after our fatiguing walk through the wood, and the rare arrival of strangers in that solitary place was sufficiently indicated by a curious

fact. Scarcely had we seated ourselves, when in bounced a young fellow, in the somewhat picturesque dress of a student. With a familiar nod he saluted us; informed us that it was very warm, of which we had only too much proof, and took his seat opposite to gaze at us. Then entered a woman of about forty—a light, active woman, with the look of a town about her, with a cap on trimmed with pink ribands, a worked collar, and smart apron. She made no hesitation in saying that she supposed we were from a distance; and being assured of that, said that, perhaps, we were from some foreign country; assured of that too, she inquired—“Was it from France?”—“No.” “From England?”—“Yes.”—“Wonderful!” she exclaimed—“how far off!”

She brought a chair and seated herself, and wanted to hear all about England, and to hear English spoken. She had heard, she said, Dutch, and French, and Hungarian, but never English. To oblige her, we spoke a few sentences in English, at which she lifted up her hands and eyes, and exclaimed—“*Sonderbar!*”—extraordinary!

We told her that we wanted to go to the scene of the Wild Huntsman, and asked her if they ever heard him now, and whether she believed in the legend. “God forbid!” she exclaimed, coming close to me, and, with her finger emphatically aiding her expression, said—“*Bloss eine Bauern’bildung—eine Bauern’bildung!*”—a peasant’s invention!—a peasant’s invention!

She then informed me that she was a widow; had been a widow thirteen years, and had had four sons, one of whom was a civil engineer; one a tutor in a family; one a student at some neighbouring university; and the youngest, the young man before us, the schoolmaster of this village. That she lived near Darmstadt, and was come to see this son and the engineer at the neighbouring

dorf of Gumper. "Of course you'll go to Gumper?" said she.—"No; why should we go to Gumper? What was there remarkable there?"—"There is my son!" was the conclusive reply.

This singular and lively woman then set on and ridiculed the country dialect of the Odenwald with much fun and genuine humour. She wanted to know what the Wild Huntsman was called in English, and then made many ludicrous attempts, but in vain, to pronounce it. *The*, she could make nothing of, till at length she discovered that she must put her tongue against her teeth to make this peculiar sound. When she had still tried to master this phrase for some time in vain, her son started out in triumph—"Ach! es ist the vilde honter!" and both he and his mother were quite amazed at his success.

As she was going to Gumper, and as our way lay for some distance in the same direction, she requested permission to accompany us so far, and speedily appeared with her parasol in one hand, and her little basket on her arm.

Our walk was a most beautiful one, over high, wild, and rocky ground, on the hill-side, with the beech woods of Neunkirchen above us, and views below, through openings in the hills, over a vast landscape, with the fine castle of Lichtenstein not far below us, and the castle of Ehrenberg on its hill in the far distance. Our vivacious guide and her son went on talking of a variety of matters, telling us the names of the plants and the villages in sight, and inquiring whether I was a nobleman, or a merchant, one of the ministers, or what else.

After descending the next hill she directed us how to find the Rodenstein, and took a regretful adieu, seeming to stand on the hill-side where we left her, and hold an earnest talk with her son before they proceeded onwards.

RODENSTEIN—THE SCENE OF THE WILD HUNTER.

We entered the woods in which Rodenstein, the remains of the castle of the Wild Hunter, lies. The entrance to these woods is particularly beautiful. It was near the opening of a glen shut in by high wooded hills. The sun was getting low, but our path was lit up by a ruddy glow. The way was over a rocky track; the green valley lay below us, and above us hung the beech woods which clothe these hills for miles. The green boughs stretched themselves from the wood-side, over a short verdant turf enriched by those summer flowers that grow pretty much there as in England; the marjorum, the wild carrot, here and there a crimson pink, and a stem of the golden rod. Around us, in various heights and positions, stood masses of rock, some of them almost hidden by trees; and the clematis hung its festoons from the branches around. It was a place of solemn beauty and repose. We sate down for some time on a mass of rock, and gazed with pleasure on the scene. Proceeding again, the path continued along the wood near the bottom of the valley, but never descending into it. Like the forest we had traversed in the morning, we found this extensive; and the sun suddenly dropping behind the mountains, cast a shade through it that was particularly solemn. We had again around us one wide view of the silent and grey stems of trees, the green canopy above, the brown floor of dead leaves below. Here and there started up great rocks, half shrouded in trees, and all was silent as a tomb. As we went onward, that "brown horror of the woods," as Pope calls it, gradually deepened. We descended into deep glens only to ascend out of them again, and to find ourselves still without view or outlet to Rodenstein. At length we came to a wild mass

of rock below us, called the *Wilde Weibschens-stein*, or Stone of the Little Wild Woman, from the legend that it is the haunt of a brownie, in the shape of a little woman, that at times comes out when some one is late in his harvest, and cuts the corn, or binds the sheaves after the reapers, and astonishes them with the quantity of work that is done.

The scene at that hour almost authenticated the legend to our feelings; it was sombre and impressive in the extreme. Around us rose those vast woods, below us sunk that deep and secluded valley. Here were the haunted rocks of rustic superstition, looking dark and fit for supernatural habitation; and on the other hand stretched the profound and shadowy solitude of the forest, which the melancholy note of one single wood-pigeon made only more solitary. Mrs. Howitt begged that we might hasten out of this place, for it affected her beyond expression with awe and apprehension. We pushed on, and descending rapidly into the valley, all at once among the tall trees stood the ruins of Rodenstein.

They are in a spot thoroughly befitting the legend. They lie in a sort of cove in the side of the hill, where that deep and secluded valley becomes wider, and leaves a space of meadow ground at the bottom. All around it tower up beech woods, which cover the whole hill for miles. It stands in a hollow shrouded by trees, yet not at the bottom of the valley. Still lower lies the *Bauer-hof*, or farmhouse belonging to it, and where in former ages the array of the Wild Hunter has been heard going out when war was approaching, or coming in when peace was about to return. The immediate vicinity of the castle consists of orchards and shrubbery walks, laid out by the proprietor, and enclosed between close rows of fir-trees, so that they are very secluded; and various flights of rustic steps and

winding ascents conduct you about the ruins, and lead you to every side of it. The greater part of one tower and various walls remain. The lower part of the tower is open on one side, and, like all such places in Germany, has a table and benches, so that parties coming thither can bring their refreshments and take them there. A wooden staircase on the outside leads to an upper story, which was locked up, but where, no doubt, by getting the key from the house, parties could sit and refresh themselves whilst they enjoyed a view over the woods, meadows, and orchards around. We passed under the arch of one of the dungeons, an arch of rude stones, the ends of which were left depending of various lengths as they happened to be, and then descended to the farm-house, where an old man who sate by the door sharpening his scythe, as the Germans in their economy do, not by grinding it away, but by hammering out the edge on a little anvil, directed us the way to Reichelsheim, the village at which we were to pass the night. It was not till we had descended the valley a considerable way that we could get a glimpse over the woods of the walls of this seat of one of the most singular and striking traditions of Germany.

Of this legend, which is devoutly believed by the peasantry of Germany, and which figures in the pages of many of their poets, a word or two may perhaps be said. The tradition is this:—In former times there lived at this castle of Rodenstein a proud and lawless earl, who, on one particular Sunday morning, took it into his head to ride a-hunting. People tried to dissuade him, but in vain; he called forth his pack of fierce dogs, which were the terror of the country, and putting his horn to his mouth blew a tremendous blast to summon his followers.

No sooner had this horn sounded, than two strangers, appalled for hunting, rode up, the one on his right hand

and the other on his left. The one on his right was a fair young man, with a mild countenance, and was mounted on a white horse; the other was as dark and fierce-looking as the earl himself, and his steed was coal-black. The earl and his attendants set forth gallantly across the country, and soon started a large stag, which kept them in full pursuit. Before long they came to corn-fields. The poor peasants, whose only hope for the year lay in the harvests of these fields, came forth and besought the earl, by all that was holy, to change his career, and not to despoil for ever themselves and their children. The fair hunter on the earl's right hand prayed him to listen to the cry of the people, while the dark one did all he could to inflame his pitiless nature. The chase sped on, trampling the corn into mire, and the weeping peasants called upon Heaven for vengeance. A little farther on, and they came to where a young man was herding cows, in the neighbourhood of a village. They were the cows of the widows and orphans, and many of them had calves. At the sight of the fierce dogs, the cows were terrified, and the dogs sprang upon several of them. The young man prayed the earl to call them off, as they were the cows of the poor widows and fatherless, and were all their wealth in the world. Again the two strange hunters acted as before, and the earl, infuriated at the audacity of the cowherd, urged the dogs forward; the cows were killed, and the poor herd himself left dead on the field. After this, they came to a wood where a pious hermit dwelt, who, seeing this man of wrath and cruelty approaching, went forth to meet him, with words of exhortation on his lips. Again the fair hunter pleaded, but in vain; and the earl, raising his hunting-whip, began to chastise the hermit for his presumption. But in an instant all was changed! The present had become the past, and a long, awful future lay before the

earl. From that moment, mounted on his fiery hunter, he was doomed to ride till the day of judgment, with all his dogs in full career, chasing after a spectral stag, and driven onward by avenging spirits. From that time he has been the harbinger of woe and war; and in seasons of public calamity and distress, is believed to be heard issuing forth at midnight with the speed of the whirlwind, and the cry of spectral horns and hounds.

The most entire faith exists in the minds of the uneducated peasantry in this omen; and the year after we visited this place, when there was a general excitement regarding a war with France, it was firmly believed among the people that it would take place, because many inhabitants of the Odenwald had heard the going forth of the Wild Huntsman.

THE CASTLE OF COUNT ERBACH, DESCENDANT OF CHARLEMAGNE.

Reichelsheim, where we passed the night, is a regular German village; heavily built, ill paved, and dirty, as such villages usually are. Here, at seven o'clock in the evening, we saw the swine which had been out under the charge of the village swineherd in the woods and stubbles, come scampering into the village like so many greyhounds. They wanted nobody to take them home, but some ran down one street, and some down another; here one turned into a yard, and there one into another. Such a herd of long-legged, long-backed, long-snouted animals as would have hugely astonished the exhibitors of prize pigs in Baker-street. All seemed eager to get home, as though they had the prospect of a good supper. By four or five o'clock in the morning, the swineherd was blowing his horn to collect them again, and out of their different yards

they came reluctantly, driven by boys to the general herd. Geese were also collecting in the same way by the village goose-maid, and as we passed through some of the villages, afterwards, towards evening, we saw geese by thousands, half running, half flying down the streets, with open beaks, as if parched by thirst, or out of breath with running. All these creatures were crying, "Home, sweet home!" as plainly as they could, and showing very little romance about woods and fields.

From this Reichelsheim we set out in the early morning in a peasant's light wagon, with a couple of heaps of straw and a couple of sacks stuffed with the same for seats; our driver occupying one sack and heap, and we the other. This was the most respectable vehicle this primitive hamlet possessed; in this way, however, we had a most delightful drive to Erbach, a distance of fifteen miles, over a part of the Odenwald, as wild as any we had passed; less cultivated, having larger patches of heath and tracts of dark Scotch fir, with here and there a boy cracking his whip astoundingly after his herd of swine.

We passed the castle of Graf von Fürstenau, near Michelstadt, a picturesque old place, and reached Erbach at noon. This place, independently of its pleasant situation in an open and cultivated country, is celebrated for the castle of the Graf, or Count von Erbach, in which the late count, with great exertion and expense, made a very rare and valuable collection of arms, armour, and antiques. In one large hall, called the Rittersaal, or Knight's Hall, are the arms and armour of some of the most celebrated heroes of Germany. Amongst the armour is that of Götz von Berlichingen, Wallenstein, Gustavus Adolphus, the celebrated King of Sweden, Franz Sickingen, etc. These suits of armour are fitted on lay figures, with faces painted

as much as possible after the likenesses of the respective owners, so that you seem to have the actual men before you. There are sixteen of these, and various figures on horseback, in the attitudes and habiliments of the tournament, after the fashion and in imitation of those of Goodrich Court, as Sir Samuel Meyrick himself assured us. Some of these knights had the most grotesque horns, wings, and other bearings, on their helmets; one helmet, in fact, representing the face of a dog. The shields and swords of other knights hung aloft with their escutcheons.

The windows of this hall are emblazoned with rich painted glass, and altogether it is one of the most striking halls of old romance that can be imagined. In a small chapel adjoining are the tombs of Eginhard and Emma, the founders of the family. Emma was the daughter of Charlemagne, and Eginhard his secretary. The secretary and the king's daughter became secretly attached to each other, and, as they could not meet in the lady's apartments on account of her attendants, the princess used to meet the secretary at his own. One night, a fall of snow having taken place during the princess's visit, to prevent discovery through the prints of her feet being observed on the snow in the court, the lover carried his mistress in his arms across it. Charlemagne, who was contemplating the beauty of the bright moonlight night from his window, saw, with what astonishment it may be supposed, this startling spectacle; but, like a wise old monarch as he was, instead of making a riot about it, and ruining at one blow the secretary and the princess's character, he quietly, the next morning, sent for Emma to his study, where the secretary was sitting ready to obey his commands in writing; and telling the terrified lovers what he had seen, said, that as things had gone so far, it was as well that they should go a little farther, and, therefore,

he would put them both into confinement; whereupon, he called in a priest, and—married them! As a dowry with his favourite daughter, he gave the lucky secretary the estate of Michelstadt.

Their portraits hang in a large family-gallery in the castle, with a number of others. There is what is called the *Gewehr-Kammer*, or armoury, which contains a very fine collection of arms of all countries, especially of guns, many of which are of exquisite workmanship. There are also arms used in the chase, and numbers of the horns of deer, with the date and place of their being killed; as, for instance, the gun with which the countess shot the forty stags.

Not the least worthy of inspection is the room of classical antiquities, in which are many fine statues and busts of Greeks and Romans,—especially the statue of Trajan sitting,—one of Hadrian,—and one of Mercury as a child, a most admirable thing, full of characteristic life and spirit; busts of Scipio Africanus, Antoninus Pius, Titus, etc., with a great number of Roman military antiquities, standards, helmets, swords, bottles, and other earthen vessels; the complete armour of a Roman soldier; and a fine set of Etruscan vases.

While we were in the Rittersaal, a company of ladies came in, and sate down to coffee. They had, like all German ladies, their work-baskets with them, and seemed preparing for a pleasant afternoon of work and chat. Inquiring who they were, the man who showed us the room said they were the Countess von Erbach and her friends. The countess was an old, but active and cheerful-looking lady; and the simplicity of her life, taking coffee thus after a one-o'clock-dinner, and sitting to work in this grand old Rittersaal, was very striking and amusing in its contrast to English life,—to what, indeed, this

lady, but recently on a visit to the late Queen Dowager, must have found at the court of London.

We had a letter to Fräulein Rouse, one of the countess's ladies, and mentioning the circumstance to the man, "Here she is," he said, and immediately stepped across the room to the ladies and informed her. Fräulein Rouse instantly came forward, took the letter, which was from her friend the Countess Kilmansegge, and in the politest manner insisted on doing the courtesies of the house to us.

THE HUNTING-LODGE OF THE PRINCE OF LEININGEN, AND THE KATZENBUCKEL.

From Erbach we posted in the evening to Eberbach on the Neckar, down the beautiful Gammelsbach Thal; and thence the next morning ascended through the woods of Emmensberg to Katzenbuckel, the highest point of the Odenwald.

On the summit of Emmensberg, after winding up the steep woods, we came to a hunting-lodge of the Prince of Leiningen, the son of the Duchess of Kent, and, of course, half-brother to the Queen of England. We went into the lodge, where we found two men at work, cleaning and preparing for the family, which was expected in a few days from the Tyrol, to be present at a grand review at Schwetzingen. The lodge is a perfectly plain building, furnished in the plainest possible manner, without any paintings, or works of art of any kind—a mere rustic resort for the prince while hunting there. English fireplaces, a few wooden chairs, tables, and German beds of the plainest quality, were all the furniture, except a quantity of stags' horns, the owners of which had been killed in these woods, and upon each pair of which was inscribed the date of its fall.

One of the workmen, going a little way through the woods to put us in the right road, gave us the account of several hunts, and repeatedly asked—" *Understanden Sie mich?*" which sounded so much like English that we asked him if he could speak it, at which he very much wondered. This, however, was not the only instance in which the Oldenwald dialect sounded like English. Instead of *ja* and *nein*, the Odenwalders say, *yo* and *no*, for yes and no. On asking our way to the Katzenbuckel tower, a boy tending his goats said, "*Reht forrats,*" which was very much what a countryman in England might have said. Another spoke of the *sonshine*.

The Katzenbuckel itself is a hill of no great height, but it stands upon a very high ground, and has a tower built upon its summit, which commands an immense view, in one direction over Heilbronn, to the heights of Waldenburg between Stuttgart and Tübingen, and in a favourable state of the atmosphere, as far as the beautiful region of the Swabian Alps, a district of poets and poetry, which bounds the horizon; while the other side is bounded by the Taurus and the hills of the Rhine.

Around the tower is a picturesque scene of rocky ground and wooded thickets. As we approached it, we heard, through the surrounding trees, low voices, like the cooing of doves, and then good hearty smacks, perhaps the loudest that ever were heard, which, while they gave good evidence of human presence, sounded something startling in this, high, wild place. The next moment, the turn in the road brought us in front of a bowery seat, where sat the loving couple we had been made aware of—a man and woman of respectable, but not very juvenile aspect. She was stout and very good looking, with a ruddy and somewhat sunburnt countenance, and her dark hair all gathered up from the front and sides of her face, and fastened in a

sort of crown on the top of her head, a mode of dressing the hair not unfrequent in Germany, and to some faces giving a becoming effect. Her lover, however, did not seem to have engrossed all her attention, for, like a regular German woman, she had brought her knitting, and was working away busily all the time.

They looked not at all disconcerted at being thus discovered; and he, lifting his cap at our approach, bade us good morning with the utmost self-complacency. I remarked that they, no doubt, found it very pleasant sitting there, at which the lady smiled, blushed, and knit faster than ever. We inquired if they had yet mounted to the tower, to which they replied, "No; they were yet too warm, and were waiting here to cool." We, however, not being too warm, bade them good morning, and went on. At the foot of the tower, to our astonishment, we found a man with a velocipede!

This man was one of those mortals who are always scheming, and inventing, and wandering about; rolling stones which gather no moss, nor, in fact, anything but eccentricities. He had invented a sort of carriage, in which literally the cart was put before the horse; the horse or horses, pushing it on, like a man wheeling a barrow. The driver was placed behind, and before the horses was a looking-glass, so that when he raised his whip, they saw it, and by the very fear of it, escaped its infliction, pushing on, and so needing no stroke. This ingenious mechanic mounted the tower before us. At the top, he soon fell into discourse with us, and having told us his various and extensive travels, reaching even to the Brazils, he was then anxious to learn whether in England we were blessed with velocipedes. I assured him that twenty years ago I knew a gentleman who rode on one from London to the north of Scotland, a ride of seven hundred miles; and after that

took a long journey in France upon it. Delighted at this account, he hastened to inform the loving couple in the bower of it, and we seized the opportunity to descend, and get clear of him, as he had been particular in his inquiries whether we knew the road to the next village. While he was relating the story of the Englishman who rode through England, Scotland, and France, on a velocipede, we quietly withdrew through the wood. Presently we saw him driving down the hill, evidently in quest of us. Now and then he stopped; looked eagerly round, then went on again, but not finding us, with evident chagrin he returned up the hill.

Who could have expected to find lovers, and velocipedes, and mechanical geniuses, on such a wild and far-off hill as this? But odd people are found in very odd places, and having allowed them to occupy us thus long, we must return to the tower.

From the top of the tower, as might be expected, a magnificent view is obtained. Below, at some little distance, lies the Valley of Hell, so called from the depth, and gloom, and dreariness of its aspect. The strangeness of the general scene, however, consists in our finding ourselves on a high table-land, with its wide plains, its villages, and solitary woods and fields, up as it were in the air. In this high and isolated region the peasants were getting in their harvests, and ragged boys were tending their goats, and wild girls, all health and activity, climbing aloft into the apple and pear trees, and shaking their mellow crops to the ground; as in a sort of little world of their own.

DRIVE ALONG THE NECKAR THAL.

A pair of good horses conveyed us along the still beautiful banks of the Neckar in the evening to Neckarelz,

where we found ourselves in a wide vale, surrounded by vineyards and populous villages, and on the hill opposite to our inn, the fine old castle of Neuberg. Our inn was one of those which by their exterior lead you to anticipate but indifferent entertainment; but the cleanness of all within told a different tale. We were received by a little, quick, plump young woman, the landlord's daughter, and evidently the ruling spirit of the house. She showed us a nice chamber, then opened a spacious eating-room, and inquired what we would have; and then flew, full of good-humoured vivacity, to prepare it. She was one of those lively, good-natured, bright-spirited, and occasionally arch creatures, who make all things pleasant about them. She surrounded us with all the comforts and luxuries of the house; arranged for our journey on the morrow, and was ever at hand, and willing to chat about the neighbourhood, and to tell us all we wanted to know, as if it were her greatest delight to study our pleasure. When she wanted to describe anything very forcibly she had a way which many Germans have, of clapping her forefinger on the ridge of her nose, placing her face forwards, pretty near yours, and then with the turns of her finger, and the turns of her head, making that as clear as day which her active tongue would have made tolerably intelligible without.

When we retired to our chamber, she saw our eyes glance up to the window, which was without curtains. "Ah!" said she, with an arch smile, "you'll say the money is wanting here; but no, the curtains are only in the wash." She was one of those good-tempered, merry, and clever little creatures, who might figure as an inn-keeper's daughter in a romance.

It was quite an eventful night. Before we slept, a magnificent thunder-storm frowned darkly over the valley,

and then blazing out, lit up the stern old castle on the opposite hill, and the waters of the Neckar. The singular sight of extensive expanses of linen, covering the meadows before the houses, and guarded through the night by watchmen and dogs, in huts of straw for the purpose; the watchman with his horn blowing through the night, and his rhymed speech sung out every hour; the wild, tempestuous glow of the morning through deep shadows on the hill sides, and the distant landscape, gave a character to the place and the scene which were highly impressive. It was darkly grand and solemn as a landscape of Salvator Rosa.

THE CASTLE OF GÖTZ VON BERLICHINGEN.

The next day's journey was still up the Neckar, still beautiful with its wooded hills and vineyard slopes, and as thickly studded with villages below, and castles and old convents above—some converted into secular dwellings—as on the Rhine itself. Amongst these came first the striking pile of Hornberg, the ancient seat of Götz von Berlichingen; whence, after the *Bauern-Krieg*, or Peasants' War, he was ordered not to remove; where he wrote his own life, and where he died. It stands on the left bank of the Neckar, as you go up from Neckarelz, and just above the village of Neckarzimmern. It is finely situated, and is a very picturesque and striking ruin. We quitted our carriage at Neckarzimmern, and walked up the steep road among the vineyards, and entered the court-yard by an old gateway house, upon which still remain some armorial insignia, although the main shield has been taken away. An active and good-looking old woman of eighty, a great age for a German peasant, was our guide; and the jüger, or keeper, came out of his cot-

tage in the court, with his game-bag slung at his side, and, accosting us with great respect, seemed quite pleased that the English came so far to see the abode of Götz von Berlichingen, with whom, he said, the glory of knight-hood had departed.

The castle is extremely interesting. Various outworks, with picturesque towers, lead you up into the inner court, and the ruins of the Rittersaal, or baronial hall. Part of the present ruins, by their date of 1572, appeared to have been built or restored by the successors of Götz. The entrance to the eating-room of this date is a curiously-decorated door-frame, having one side beautifully carved with different figures, but so curiously turned at the top, that one jamb has this carving outside, and the other inside. The Rittersaal is a fine large room; the old kitchen, chambers, and chapel remain. In the lower, out-hanging towers are dungeons, one of which is entered from above by gratings, according to the usual fashion of the times. A lofty look-out tower gives a vast prospect over the country. The whole is perched aloft like an eagle's nest, and looks down grandly on a fine sweep of the Neckar below.

Behind this castle of Hornberg, at a moderate distance, rise wooded hills, with roads pleasantly winding up them into the woods. A more lovely situation cannot be conceived; and the circumstance, that from his unfortunate and compulsory participation in the peasants' war, the noble-minded Götz was, for thirty-seven years, a close prisoner here in his own house, and employed his leisure in reviewing and writing his own life, gives a deep interest to it. We cannot help seeing him in the bloom of his years and his fame, issuing forth gaily with his followers to slay the stag and the boar in the forests, that still seem so pleasantly to invite you; or to chastise some

proud and lawless robber knight, and succour the distressed poor. We then see the peasants marching up by thousands from Weinsberg and Wimpfen—we see them come swarming up these steeps; mounting the one hill which, projecting from the forests above, comes down into the immediate neighbourhood of the castle itself, and there holding parley with the gallant knight, threatening to burn him out of his castle if he would not put himself at their head. We see his unfortunate compromise—the agreement to put himself at their head for a month; their defeat; his captivity at Heilbronn; his removal hither, and his solitary abode in his lofty fastness, gazing out, day after day, over the forests and the fields, that were forbidden, on pain of death, to his footsteps; and thence, turning inwards to his own past life, and sitting down, from day to day, to write portions of it.

His castle, not many years after his death, went into the family of its present possessors—the family of Gemmingen—who reside at Carlsruhe; but in an adjoining building, called the Mantel-Bau, which became the dwelling-place of the later proprietors, is still kept a plain suit of his armour, his pilgrim-staff, his banner-staff, and his sword. At Jaxthausen, another house of his, at some distance, still live his descendants, and there his “iron hand” is still kept.

In this neighbourhood lie numerous castles, as Ehrenberg, Minneberg, to which striking and poetical legends are attached. We passed also Wimpfen-am-Berg, an old town, now a watering-place, pleasantly situated on the heights above the Neckar, and Wimpfen-im-Thal. They are now busy with great salt-works. These places lie in the very midst of the terrible scenes of that famous peasant war which forms so remarkable a feature in German history; and near Wimpfen-im-Thal lies also the battle-field where the Markgraf, George Frederick of Baden,

fought against the Bavarians and Spaniards in April, 1622, under Tilly and Corduba, and where he had been totally defeated, had not four hundred of the people of Pfortzheim, under the command of their Bürgermeister, Deimling, saved him at the expense of their own lives.

THE COACHMAN AND THE BRANDY-BOTTLE.

Our driver from Neckarelz took the sulks, because we would delay him by visiting the castle of Götz von Berlichingen. When we stopped at the foot of the hill, and said we would walk up, and he could wait there, he showed much evident reluctance to his waiting. "What could we see there?" he inquired; "it was only an ugly old ruin." But this ugly old ruin we determined to see; and, as I have related, did see. On our return the man looked very glum; and as soon as we had seated ourselves, began to move on at a most regular snail's pace. As he had a splendid pair of horses, we desired him to put on briskly; but he still refused. On being again told to quicken his movements, he replied, sulkily, that he could not, the roads were so bad. Never was a finer or more level road seen! We now perceived the true state of the case. He was vexed that we had delayed him, and he was still more vexed that we had not told him to amuse his leisure with a choppin of wine at the neighbouring village. There was also another cause, not till afterwards revealed. He had an acquaintance in Weinsberg with whom he meant to contrive to have a gossip, and he feared that a pause in this part of the journey might make a hurry in that part of it: therefore, the man displayed a most dogged obstinacy. All endeavours to persuade him to accelerate his speed, or even to resume his communicativeness, were in vain. We crept along at a most wearisome rate, and in

time reached the little town of Neckarsulm. Here we resolved to stop and recover our patience over an early dinner. But the dinner was bad, and the wine—red wine of the Neckar valley, famous rather for its acerbity than its goodness—was bad too. It occurred to us, however, that the wine might be very agreeable to the driver's palate, probably accustomed to much worse. We, therefore, called him in, and presented him with the bottle. The sunshine that at once passed over his countenance was almost ludicrous, and suggested another idea. We had a flask of cogniac in our knapsack in the carriage, which we had brought to mix in the water that we might, when we were hot, drink in our contemplated ramble on foot. We asked the man, as the wine was sour, whether he would like a glass of *schnaps*—the name they give brandy—in it. The effect was beyond all description. He skipped away with amazing alacrity; brought the knapsack from the carriage, and bore off his bottle of wine with exuberant thanks, and smiles, and bows.

Anon, he appeared again at the door, to say that he was altogether at our service; he could go that moment, or he could stay till midnight—just whichever we pleased. When we did set out, the roads were found to be most admirable, and he drove almost at full speed up the long and very steep hill ascending out of the town. The weather, he assured us, was beautiful; the ugly old ruins were beautiful; we were beautiful; and the knapsack was pre-eminently beautiful. He had it placed on the box beside him, and repeatedly stroked it, saying—“*Schöne Ranzen! wunder-schöne Ranzen!*” “Handsome knapsack! extremely handsome knapsack!” The beauty being, obviously enough, in the brandy-flask inside. This brandy-flask operated like a charm upon him. He became not only the most agreeable and communicative of drivers,

pointing out every spot of interest in the country we passed through, and relating their histories and legends; but when we finally reached Heilbronn, refused positively to be dismissed, and insisted on going with us to Heidelberg, thirty miles further, in the day, though he had driven us already that distance. In fact, it was plain that he would have driven to the end of the world, and a little farther, if he could have had the brandy-bottle on the driving-box beside him. To return, however, from the driver to the journey.

WEINSBERG AND THE PEASANTS' WAR.

From the heavy and dirty town of Neckarsulm, we posted on to Weinsberg, a place not only notorious for the horrors committed there in the Bauern-Krieg, or Peasants' War, but which in our youth was made of great interest to us by reading in Addison's "Spectator" the account of the Wives of Weinsberg, or rather, the Women of Weinsberg, for the *Weiber*, translated as wives, should more correctly and comprehensively have been rendered women.

The situation of Weinsberg is very charming. It is in the middle of a wide, open, and well-cultivated plain, with a clear, rapid stream running through it. All around, at the distance of a mile or two, rise up the woody and winding hills so peculiar to this part of Germany, the sides of which are all covered with vineyards. Here and there open out, between the hills, vales, running far away, in which you discern the white walls of villages.

Weinsberg is a compact little town, and one of the neatest in that neighbourhood. Just by it stands a high and conical hill, clad on all sides with vines, and on its

summit the ruins of the old castle of Weinsberg, still popularly called "*Die Weiber-Treue*," or Woman's Fidelity, from this circumstance:—When the Emperor Conrad, in 1140, besieged the castle, into which the people had fled, and summoned them to surrender, he would give no promise of quarter to the men; but he pledged himself to allow the women to go out, carrying with them what they liked best. These terms were accepted; and to the astonishment of the emperor, he beheld the women coming forth in a train, carrying each her husband, her brother, or near relative. So popular has this act of female fidelity always been, that the fame of it has flown into all countries; it has furnished the subject of one of Bürger's most spirited ballads; and a society of ladies still, headed by the Queen of Würtemberg, keep the ruins from falling into decay, and have the whole space within the walls laid out in a pleasure-garden for the accommodation of visitors.

But the castle and the town of Weinsberg acquired a more fearful notoriety in the celebrated Peasants' War in 1525. The preaching of the Reformation by Luther was unquestionably the immediately exciting cause of this war. The peasantry had for ages been cruelly oppressed by the nobility, and were now reduced to a condition of the saddest misery. The doctrines of Christianity as preached by Luther, representing all men as free and equal, and the rulers as lording it over the people, had the most rapid effect in kindling the popular mind into a ferment, which, as in all such cases, foamed over into cruel extravagance; and led the oppressed, not merely to vindicate themselves, but to take vengeance on their oppressors, forgetting that the very Scriptures which they took as their warrant, said—"Vengeance is the Lord's, and he will repay it."

The insurrection of the peasants was particularly fearful in this part of the country. Seventy noblemen were sent by the Austrian government from Stuttgard to keep peace in the valley of Weinsberg. The Weinsbergers had sworn to stand by them in case of attack; but they perjured themselves. They sent Wolf Nagel's wife to Neckarsulm, who went about amongst the "Black Host," a noted part of the peasant army, and said—"George Ry, Brezel Pikel, Melchior Becker, and Leonard Kellermann, sent me to you to say, that if you will come to Weinsberg, they will open the gates to you." Twenty thousand peasants marched from Neckarsulm on Easter-day to Weinsberg.

The nobles were all down in the city together in the church, praying for a morning blessing in those sharp times. They hastened, at the alarm of the peasant host, to get out of the city, and up again into the castle; but the treacherous Weinsbergers had fastened the gates and doors, which, however, they speedily opened to the peasants. The battle began. The Weinsbergers discharged their pieces into the air, and stood looking on. The nobles were overpowered and destroyed. One of them, Dietrich von Weller, a handsome and stately man, sought to conceal himself in a church steeple; but was discovered, stabbed, and thrown from its top into the street.

The unhappy nobles were marched out with drums beating and fifes playing, to an open place near the road leading from Weinsberg to Heilbronn, and there hunted through the pikes. Twelve thousand bauers, or peasants, marshalled themselves in two rows, holding their huge pikes before them. Between these rows the wretched nobles were compelled to run till they fell, pierced through by a hundred pikes. A bauer-wife, from Bökingen, greased her shoes with the fat of the Graf von Helfenstein, whom they had murdered with

much mockery. They placed the Gräfin von Helfenstein, when she came to beg for the life of her husband, on a dung-cart; and numbers of them, running before and behind, conducted her to Heilbronn, with all sorts of jests and gibes. "So, thou camest in a golden chariot, and now thou goest away in a dung-cart." The Gräfin, who was a pious woman, thought on her Saviour, and comforted herself in the thought. She said meekly, "Why should I, a poor sinner, complain? The Son of God, my most holy Lord, was once led into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, with the state of a king, and with loud jubilee; and presently after was abused and crucified as a malefactor. Therefore I will keep silence."

The peasants plundered and burnt the castle; but a bloody vengeance soon arrived. The notorious George Truchsess, the general of the Swabian nobles, who so severely scourged and mercilessly slaughtered the peasants in May of the same year, appeared before the town. The peasants were absent on their plundering expeditions; there were scarcely any but women, and children, and the sick at home. These hastened out, and flung themselves at his feet, with most vehement prayers and tears for mercy; but he stood ice-cold, and only answered by ordering his soldiers to fire the town at every end and corner. All their goods and chattels he commanded to be brought out; 500 florins to be paid down to the widow of Graf Helfenstein, the lady whom they had so villainously treated, and to her son 6000. On the spot where they had murdered that nobleman, he compelled them to plant a cross and build a chapel, and on every Easter Monday to go in, and, from sunrise to sunset, on their knees, to pray to God for pardon. On the piper, Nunenmacher of Ilsfeld, he took a dreadful revenge. This man

had been the piper to Graf Von Helfenstein, and when that nobleman was led out to be murdered, he was the foremost to deride him. He snatched the hat from his head, and putting it on his own—"Herr Graf," said he, "many times I have played before you at dinner; it is only reasonable that I play to you at another sort of entertainment." This man Truchsess chained to a tree, so that he had liberty to run round it, and piling wood over him, set it on fire, and burnt him to death in the most horrible manner, his soldiers amusing themselves with his agonies.

How peaceful and smiling are all these scenes now! Of this peasant war, in which 100,000 people perished, in which castles and convents were plundered, their inmates abused or murdered, and the country reduced to a frightful desert, few traces remain, except in the traditions and written records. Weinsberg, which had thus its full share of horrors, is as smart and quiet as if it had never known an outrage. Nature has covered the old towers with its healing boughs and blossoms; man has clothed the whole hill with vines; and all the country between it and the picturesque old Heilbronn is one great garden and vineyard.

JUSTINUS KERNER, THE POET AND GHOST-SEER.

At the foot of the Weibertreue lives one of the most beautiful lyric poets, and most remarkable men of Germany, Justinus Kerner. Kerner was a fellow-student of the poet Uhland at Tübingen; was originally destined to trade, but quitted it for the study of physic and the love of poetry. The cause of his abode here is his being appointed the official physician at Weinsberg. He built his house, on this appointment, at the foot of this celebrated hill, and in a very lovely situation. Through his

means and his influence at the court of Würtemberg, it is that the castle has been freed from the rubbish of ancient ruin, and made the pleasant resort that it is.

The poetry of Kerner is at once most spiritual and tender, and yet very often merry and jocose. In his "Reiseschatten" he has given us some sketches of the wanderings of his youth, alternately fanciful, sentimental, and waggish. His account of the musician who professed to have discovered the art of playing the most exquisite music on a goose's windpipe, by which he threw whole audiences into ecstasies, but which a stern old professor exposed in the very midst of one of his triumphs, by lifting his wig from his head with his stick, and showing that he had a musical box concealed in it, is worthy of a Yankee origin. Kerner himself is a most extraordinary player on the Jew's harp. Closing all the windows, or, at night, putting out all the lights, he will produce the most strange and unearthly music, making the very room seem to vibrate, and to be filled with a band of ærial performers. The only wonder is, that, considering Kerner's opinions and character, it is not supposed that they are in reality ærial performers who produce this music.

Kerner's "Deutscher Dichterwald," his "Romantische Dichtungen," and other poetical works, all bear evidences of a genuine inspiration; but his most extraordinary book is "Die Seherinn von Prevorst." This book has been translated, somewhat curtailed, and adapted to the English taste, by Mrs. Crowe, of Edinburgh. It is the account of a Mrs. *Hauffe*, a lady who was many years the patient of Kerner at Weinsberg. She was a regular mesmeric subject; came from a very electrical district in the Swabian Alps; and in the mesmeric state made the most extraordinary revelations of the spiritual world, and not the less so of the facts in the world around her. Like Kerner

himself, she professed to have a full perception of the spiritual world, as it lies in and around our own. She held conversation with various spirits, and was often requested by those who were not arrived at happiness, to pray for them, which she did with effect. She set right a pecuniary wrong done by an old miller, through his appearance to her the very first day of her arrival at Weinsberg, the whole place, except Dr. Kerner, being strange to her. This case, which was effected through the magistrate of the town, is attested by him.

The book is well worthy of a perusal; and to the original are added a number of what Kerner calls "Facts," that is, actual ghost stories, which he authenticates by the grave testimonies of noblemen, clergymen, magistrates, and the like, still living, and open to reference. Most of these curious "Facts" are to be found in Mrs. Crowe's "Night-Side of Nature." Kerner has been laughed at, of course, by all the wits of Germany, but he only laughs good-humouredly again, and holds fast his faith. He is now suffering from cataract, and is nearly blind.

HEILBRONN AND HOMEWARDS.

After visiting the fine old cathedral of Heilbronn, with its rich carvings and old paintings, noting the curious old town-house, and its grandly painted and curiously illustrated clock, and taking a view of its picturesque streets and pleasant vicinage, with its poplar walks and ample pleasure gardens, we posted through a well-cultivated country back to Heidelberg. The peasants with their families were out by the road-sides, busy collecting their apples, and others of them as busy in their yards, crushing them for cider in their simple but effective mills for that purpose, making the whole country very lively and pleasant.

In this tour we passed, it is true, a good way beyond the strict bounds of the Odenwald; and, on the other hand, left in it many a charming old district to explore. It is altogether one of the most primitive pieces of country that we ever entered, and seems likely to continue so. In the corn-fields we noticed that the people mowed even in a manner peculiar to themselves. They did not mow in straight lines, but in circles. They would begin and mow round the whole field, and then go round and round till they came to the centre. But much oftener they took in a much smaller circle, still mowing from the outside to the centre, so that a field mowed presented the appearance of a number of great golden snakes coiled up, with their heads in the centre of the coil.

Altogether, the deep wooded valleys, the still waters, here and there embosomed in the forest, the clear streams in other places hurrying along the shrouded glens, the antique lowly dwellings, and the simple people, made a deep and pleasurable impression on our minds, and will often recur to them with the feeling of a poetic dream. Farewell to the sweet and primitive region, with its rustic wooden tenements with ornamental shingled walls, its luxuriant herbage, its splendid old trees, its dreamy waters, and airy hills peeping everywhere down upon you. May health and peace, improvement without the loss of quiet, the simple nature of the heart, with the picturesque nature of the field and forest, be long the portion of the inhabitants of the Odenwald!



OCTOBER.

IN casting our eyes forward through the month before us, we are startled to see that it is the last of those in which we look for fine weather. That it ushers in November, a name associated with gloom, and fogs, and storms; and often with the rigours of winter. The bright but calm suns which shine over us this month are the last of the season. The autumn winds up its account of harvests and out-of-door pleasures, and as the last swallows take their flight, our travellers return from many a foreign ramble amid the vineyards of the continent. The last birds of summer that are migratory depart, and in come

from northern climes wild geese, the hooded crow, and the woodcock, to *winter* with us. It is come to that—the very creatures of the air and the field, undeceived by suns that still shine, and leaves that still hang on the tree, are thinking of winter, and resorting to winter quarters. And wanderers return from mountains and sea-coasts, and begin to think of *their* winter quarters; to anticipate, with a feeling of luxury, firesides, long, quiet evenings, and books.

It is a month in which to still walk abroad during the short, bright hours of the day, to enjoy the tranquil splendour, the greenness and the freshness of the atmosphere, and to feel thankful for all the good and beauty that the summer has brought us. The very butterflies do so. You see them, or at least a few of them, still hovering over the flowers of the garden, or settling on the warm wall, basking in the glow of the noon sun. They lift their wings with a feeling, as it were, of a happiness which knows no care. Confined it may be in extent, but it is not the happiness of man, that can be desolated by a thousand circumstances. They know nothing of speculations and failures. They know nothing of rents and taxes, or of bills that may come against them. Who has not been tempted, seeing their basking beauty, to look down from the height of his intellectual house of cards, from the splendid misery of modern social life, and say, “I’d be a butterfly!”

But this is the month of forest splendour. Generally, towards the end of October, the trees put on their last grandeur. They burst forth into all the richest and warmest colours, and for a while cast a glory on the landscape that is unrivalled. Then how delightful to range through wood and field; to see the wind come, driving the many-tinted leaves before it; to tread on their rustling

masses in the still glades, and feel the profound language of the season—of all that is solemn and pure, and yet buoyant in the heart! The hops are fast getting in; the vines on the continental plains and hanging slopes are yielding up, amid songs and shouts, their purple vintage. Orchards are cleared of their fruit, and towards the end of the month the people are busy in the potato-fields. Once more the hind, released from the cares and toils of harvest, is busy turning up the soil with the plough, getting in the wheat for next year, and ditching and banking in meadow and in field. The gathering and storing of potatoes, carrots, beet-root, and Swedish turnips, find much employment. Besides the sowing of wheat, beans and winter dills are put in. Timber trees are felled, and others planted, and the farmer repairs his gates and fences: and all wise people lay in plenty of winter fuel. Winter! winter! It is continually crowding into our minds, though we do not see it with our eyes. But in the brightest hours the very seeds are on the wing, to fly away and bury themselves, each in a suitable spot, for the resurrection of the next year.

THE THISTLE-DOWN.

Lightly soars the thistle-down;
 Lightly doth it float;
 Lightly seeds of care are sown;
 Little do we note.

Lightly soars the thistle-down;
 Far and wide it flies,
 By the faintest zephyr blown
 Through the shining skies.

Watch life's thistles bud and blow,
 Oh! 'tis pleasant folly!
 But when all our paths they sow—
 Then comes melancholy.

But away with melancholy! The thistle-down *will* fly, and the thistles *will* spring up where we hoped for

roses. But never mind: let us pay the penalty of our permitting them to grow, and go on, strong in the sense of the great Providence which wheels round the mighty world and all its seasons; which causes the dark day to follow the bright one, and the bright to follow the dark; and if He suffer the thorn and the thistle to grow, gives us strength to cut them down, and consume them out of our paths. The summer is over and gone, but the summer of firesides, and books, and social parties, approaches. How many a new book is preparing; how many a beautiful picture and print! How many a meeting with old and new friends, like flowers of the summer of social life that are not yet blown. Let us rejoice in *their* possession; for when they go, then comes the real night and real winter. We have no hope of the return of these, as we have in that of everything else that comes and goes with the season. As we have in

THE DEPARTURE OF THE SWALLOW.

And is the swallow gone?
 Who beheld it?
 Which way sailed it?
 Farewell bade it none?
 No mortal saw it go.
 But who doth hear
 Its summer cheer,
 As it flitteth to and fro?
 So the freed spirit flies!
 From its shrouding clay
 It steals away,
 Like the swallow from the skies.
 Whither—wherefore doth it go?
 'Tis all unknown;
 We feel alone
 That a void is left below.

And now farewell, October, and farewell Autumn. November will come, ragged in its garb, and comparatively barren; but October will go out with a pageant and

a feast. The woods will be hung with tapestry of all glorious colours; the dark and glossy acorns will be scattered in profusion on the ground; the richly tinted and veined horse-chesnuts will glow in the midst of their rugged and spiny shells, which burst open in their fall; and hosts of birds will be enjoying a plentiful feast of beech-nuts on the tree-tops. Farewell, then, to October, in the midst of the great banquet of bountiful Nature. Man and his domestic creatures have their ample stores laid up in the winter garners; yet there is still plenty abroad for the wild as well as for the tame.

AUTUMNAL EXCURSION.

TRIP TO THE HEIDENMAUER, OR CAMP OF ATTLA, IN THE HAARDT; AND TO TRIFELS, THE PRISON OF CŒUR DE LION, IN THE VOSGES.

From our sitting-room window, in the suburb of Heidelberg, looking across the great Rhine plain, the long range of the Haardt Mountains, and the various summits of the Vosges, on the frontier of France, were objects that were perpetually attracting the eye. Now they seemed to be brought near, and through the transparent atmosphere you could follow with the eye the picturesque openings of their glens, look, as it were, into their very villages, and see their sloping vineyards as distinctly at twenty miles' distance as if they were really not more than one or two miles off. But this state of the atmosphere was the sure precursor of rain. It was the clear moisture, suspended in the air, which acted as a lens, and brought the whole scene so wonderfully to the eye. Two points in this distant view particularly presented themselves to notice. The one was the Heidenmauer (literally, the Pagan's Wall),

crowned with its diadem of dark pines, which Cooper, the American novelist, has made the subject of a romance; and the other was the peaked summit of a hill, rising out of a sea of woods, and surmounted by a tower. This was Trifels, the castle in the Vosges, in which Richard Cœur de Lion was confined. At about the distance of thirty miles as the crow flies, yet in the clear atmosphere of that region, Trifels was a distinct object whenever you looked across the plain in that direction, and, with its story, as well as its striking natural aspect, seemed continually to invite us to visit it. At length, at the end of September, the weather, as well as the noble landscape which lay spread before us, induced us to accept this pressing invitation from the Vosges, and from Attila's Camp; we took a carriage, and with the children, drove thither.

DRIVE AMONGST THE VINEYARDS.

We soon passed the bridge of boats at Mannheim into Rhenish Bavaria, and were as soon cognisant of the fact that this left bank of the Rhine was far worse cultivated than the right. The roads were only rarely bordered with fruit-trees. There were fewer fruit-trees in the country altogether, and what there were appeared small and poor. As we advanced, we found a good deal of open, poor ground, growing Scotch fir. Nearer to Dürkheim, which lies in the Haardt range, the scene changed, and the expanses of vineyards on the plain, immense in extent, running for a score of miles along the feet of the Haardt, gave a green and luxuriant aspect to the view. The German vineyards are generally too much like green, detached plots to please the eye, but here the continuity of verdant and luxuriant vines, clothing the whole plain for a score or more of miles, was really beautiful. This extent of

vineyard on the level plain is owing to the Haardt-Mountain slopes on this side lying wrong for the sun. It was curious to observe on what poor and gravelly soil the vines were flourishing; and, indeed, the more stony the ground, the more the vine seems to flourish, and the purer is the flavour of the vine. We could not help, therefore, thinking with Mr. Hoare, in his treatise of the "Cultivation of the Grape in England, in the Open Air," that many of our hot and stony moors, and as stony, steep hill-sides, might be converted into tolerable vineyards.

DÜRKHEIM AND THE HEIDENMAUER.

We found Dürkheim lying in an opening of the mountains, just as we had so often seen it from our own windows on the other side of the great Rhine valley, and, as Cooper has described it, in the Heidenmauer. It is a considerable country town, containing some thousand of inhabitants, and no less than three or four churches. It has some interest for Englishmen, as the place whence our Queen has partly sprung, being the ancient capital of the princes of Leiningen, of the last of whom the Duchess of Kent was the wife, and whose son by that marriage is the present Prince of Leiningen. During the revolutionary war, Buonaparte added this petty state to France, and, at his overthrow, it was allotted to Bavaria, in order to place a stronger power there in resistance to any future French aggression. The Prince of Leiningen had lands given him on the other side of the Rhine, and his present residence is now at Wald-Leiningen, in the Odenwald. His family was *mediatised*, or, in other words, made one of the German families which are considered sufficiently royal, though without political status or actual dominion, to furnish husbands and wives to other princely houses as

they may be wanted—an odd and very German arrangement, but a very profitable one to that country, as England itself has most wonderfully proved. Were the Duchess of Kent still living here as the Princess of Leiningen, what a different lot were hers to that of Duchess of Kent and mother of the Queen of the greatest kingdom of the world!

The town is just like all other German country towns; heavy, ill-paved, and not the cleanest, or sweetest in odour; but the country about it is beautiful. The mountains rise on three sides of it in varied and lovely shapes. We found the inn described by Cooper, the “Ox,” pulled down, and on its site a large one built, bearing the name of the “Four Seasons.” We were looking for the old-fashioned, neat, and clean place of Cooper’s tale, with its hearty landlord, and found a large, dirty-looking house, and a lumbering, heavy-looking fellow, shuffling about with his pipe in his mouth, as though he did not know what to do with himself. The table-d’hôte-room was full of people, just at dinner, for this place is on the highway from this part of the country to Paris.

The people at table stared at us as if they had never seen any stranger before. The landlord, on our inquiry whether we could be accommodated for the night, muttered something which sounded very dubious, and disappeared from the room. We were left to walk about the dirty sanded floor of the large eating-room, and satisfy the apparently not easily satiable staring of the rough-looking Germans at table. At length came springing into the room a very large, fat, but active-looking woman—our hostess. She had a small, well-turned head upon her broad shoulders, a clear, fine complexion, a very lively and good-humoured, as well as sensible, expression of countenance, and was evidently of French extraction. She speedily informed

us that the house was as full as full could be, but that several persons were going away, and all should be ready for us by night. She ordered us dinner, found the ladies a room to arrange their dress in, and in two minutes set all to rights.

A capital dinner soon made its appearance, though the table-d'hôte was just over; good wine of this place with it, and we had reason to congratulate ourselves on the turn of affairs which at first appeared so unpromising.

Opposite to the windows of the dining-room rose lofty hills with projecting rocks, which we found were those of the Heidenmauer. Our cheerful and intelligent hostess asked us if we had read Cooper's story; told us that the little tailor, Christian Kinzel, was still living; and added, that we would perhaps like to take advantage of the fine evening to ascend the Heidenmauer, she would take care to have all ready for our reception on our return.

We set out, and soon found ourselves on the outskirts of the town, and in a deep valley hemmed in by steep woody hills. Numbers of people coming townwards loaded with sticks and leaves bound up in sheets on their heads, indicated to us that up the valley lay some extensive forest region. Presently we were in an amphitheatre of hills of the most striking beauty. In the centre of this amphitheatre rose a hill filling the greater portion of the enclosed vale, and on its summit stood the ruins of the abbey of Limburg. Delighted with the scenery, we began to ascend the steep on our right, and ere long found ourselves on a lofty table-land covered with heather and pine trees. There we soon perceived, on a considerable mound, the celebrated Teufel-Stein, or Devil's Stone, and more to the right the remains of the ancient walls of the Heidenmauer. From Cooper's opening description of these scenes, we anticipated nothing of the real beauty and magnificence

that we found. It is, in fact, one of the most lovely scenes imaginable. The vale, or expanse within the mountains, is perhaps a mile or so across. The centre occupied, as I have said, by a hill which swells up from all extremities of the valley, and bears on its summit the lofty ruins of Limburg Abbey. The beauty of hill and ruins is equally great. The hill is cultivated from top to bottom in patches of garden plots and vineyards. Its ruddy bare soil, its green plots of vines, its fine scattered trees, have all a smooth, and so to say, social aspect, in pleasing contrast with the wild forest hills around, and the high yellow walls of the ruined abbey on its summit. Over all lay that profound and dream-like stillness of beauty, that enchanting *chiaro-oscuro* which we see only in the works of the greatest masters, and in nature in the moments when heaven and earth are lapped in the profoundest harmony. All round the foot of this beautiful mount runs a little stream, on one side broadened into a considerable lake, with an island in it, having the aspect of having some time been fortified. An old mill at its head made a picturesque appearance, and in its yard we saw a number of men performing an operation which in England would be deemed to require great, complicated, and expensive machinery. This was to turn a huge beam into the axle of a mill wheel; but all the machinery here needed was to drive a strong iron bolt into each end, and to place these ends on the edge of a piece of plank, and set two men at each end, with a long wooden handle attached to each pivot, to spin the beam round, while another man, with a huge chisel rested upon a spar laid alongside of the beam, reduced the beam to the required size and rotundity.

The whole valley was surrounded by white cottages. The place appeared populous and even bustling. Great stone quarries in the sides of the hills sent out sounds of

ringing hammers, and, a sight in Germany of most unusual aspect, wagons of coals, from pits somewhere near, were passing along the road. The eye rising from the scene of activity below, rested with a solemn interest on the forest hills around. These lofty, and densely clothed with woods, rose in various forms, with soaring peaks, and combs and hollows in which the shadow and the deep solitude of evening lay with even a sublime power.

Night warned us to return to our inn, but in the morning we again ascended to this impressive scene through some chestnut woods, and gazed with delight over the vast view of the Rhine plain, with its countless towns and opposite mountains. Morning too gave us further insight into these hills on which we were. Beyond the valley of Limburg we saw Hardenburg Castle, the ancient seat of the Leiningens, standing finely on its elevated terrace, as if inviting us to come on, and assuring us of hills and valleys, and forests beyond of most wild and alluring promise. Not only Cooper, but the people here assured us that these hills, on which grow some of the most ancient trees of Germany, the Jäger Thal, the Dorf of the Gipsies, and other scenes, were well worth visiting. These gipsies are said to be of the most wild, determined, and thievish character. On one occasion the village was surrounded by troops, and the whole population conveyed away to prison, the Bürgermeister of the village being found to be as great a robber as the rest. But these, with all the legends of Limburg and Hardenburg, we must leave to Cooper and the tale-writers of the country, and confine ourselves to the scene itself.

Some flights of steps cut in the rocks above the village, and passing just over the very chimneys of some of the houses, brought us out at the very Heidenmauer itself. The scene presented was well worthy of a visit. On that

table-land which we had reached the evening before, but when it was too dark to reconnoitre it well, lies a considerable expanse of gently sloping ground. This is now occupied by a pine wood; but all along the face of the precipice overlooking the Rhine plain, and all round the wood, are seen the remains of an ancient wall, a broad, grey line of stones, that have thus remained from age to age. The view is melancholy and suggestive of its own antiquity. You do not question that you stand in the camp of Attila, and of the Romans. You overlook the wide country which Attila and the Romans alternately held in possession, and which has since been the scene of many a fierce contest and strange transaction. Around you in the wood lie heaps of stones in every part, which, without doubt, formed the huts of the soldiers who, nearly two thousand years ago, occupied this lofty position and held the barbarians in subjection.

The camp, in fact, is said to have been one of the original camps of the Romans when they subdued Germany, and that they were only driven out of it by the Huns, on their way under Attila to attack the Eternal City itself. Since then the empire of Charlemagne had arisen, and divided itself into a number of great kingdoms, each one with its long and eventful history. Yet there lay the stones still piled by the Romans, and occupied by the Huns, while from the spot no longer was beheld a vast region of forests, but the huge plain cultivated like a garden, and the surrounding hills covered with the vines which Charlemagne himself had introduced. The scene was every way an ancient scene, and besides the smoke of hundreds of villages, the eye caught the distant cathedral towers of Speiers, Worms, Mannheim, and the ancient castellated heights of Heidelberg, frowning over the distant Neckar.

THE TEUFEL-STEIN AND ITS LEGENDS.

At some distance from the old camp stood the Teufel-Stein, huge and black. It is a mass of dark rock, standing on a conspicuous hill. It is precisely one of those ominous-looking stones that are to be found on the tops of hills all over the north of Europe, surrounded by an atmosphere of ancient tradition and superstition. One of those stones with which in England we associate the Druids and their worship, and with which in the northern countries of the continent they associate the rites of the followers of Odin. They are stones, in fact, that, in the Pagan times, had from ancient ages been the altars and gathering-places of savage races. In Germany these stones are everywhere called Teufel-Steinen, Devil's Stones, and Devil's Pulpits, as on the Brocken; names given to them by the Christian priests, to denote their idea of the wild religion to which they belonged. There is no doubt but that they were stained for long and dismal centuries with the blood of human victims, and, therefore, has their dark fame clung to them through more than a thousand years of Christian light. The monks, indeed, engrafted their absurd legends on the more ancient fact, because they found that they could not root out the traditional feeling connected with those spots. Therefore, in all such places, they introduce the devil either as attempting to disturb them in their sacred erections, or as being outwitted by their superior sagacity, and compelled to labour for them, like the genii of the East, by the powers of magic. In how many places have we the story of the devil carrying away the stones by night of churches and monasteries, as they were built by day, till driven off by the prayers and masses of the priests; or made to do

the work himself. At Stonehenge, the monks, claiming the erection of that venerable pile, related that he threw a huge mass of rock at one monk, which struck the monk's heel, but instead of denting it, was dented by it, and, *ecce signum!* bears the dent to this day. Here the monks of Limburg related that when engaged in building the abbey, they imposed upon the devil, made him believe the building was for some purpose of worldly pomp and pride, and thus readily got him to bring all the heavy stones and prepare them for them. Perhaps the devil, after all, was only deceiving the monks—knew very well that a monastery was one of his most profitable places, and, therefore, worked willingly at it. But, say the monks, when the abbey was complete, and the devil heard the bell ring for matins, he was so wroth that he flew to the Teufel-Stein, and endeavoured to rend it from the mountain, with the view of carrying it aloft and dropping it upon the abbey, so as to crush it to atoms. In this he was deceived. The monks had now got all their holy artillery in readiness; they swung their bell, and sung their mass, and defied him. He was compelled to desist from his attempts to tear up the rock, and sate down to rest upon it, ere he took his flight in disgrace. To this day there are the marks of his claws where he seized the rock, of his form where he sate, and even of his tail where it crossed the stone. Such is the monkish legend.

But a far higher and greyer antiquity than that of monkery rests on these hills. Everywhere you find the traces of the far-off times of heroes and sages. The abbey of Limburg itself stands on the spot where Siegfried, the hero of the Niebelungen Lied, is said to have slain the dragon. Yes, there is a Drachenfels here also, which contends for the location of this exploit with the Drachenfels

of the Lower Rhine. The hill on which Limburg stands is said to have once been an island in the centre of this valley, when that was one great lake, ere the waters burst through the gorge past Dürkheim. It is exactly one of those spots on which all the Lindworm legends are laid—founded, no doubt, in truth—and proceeding from the days of saurian monsters. On the site of the abbey of Limburg also previously stood the old family castle of the Rhine—Frankish Duke Konrad, who, with his wife Gizela, converted it into a monastery, on the occasion of their son Konrad being killed by falling from the castle walls. The very ground all around is full of mysterious tradition. There are two old ruins near the Drachenfels, called by the strange names of “Growl not too much at me,” and “Don’t look round;” and there is a forest tract called “Dare everything.” Even Limburg is derived from its connexion with the Lindworm, and the neighbouring district of Worms snacks of the same “Wurm” tradition. Hereabout, even in historic times, lived the old Burgundians, men of seven feet stature, and with long flowing hair, who were driven before the Hunnish army of Attila, and took up a new abode on the Rhone.

On our return to the inn we sent for Christian Kinzel, the little tailor, who had been Cooper’s guide to these scenes. We found him a thin, grey, little old man, whose faculties, as we understood, never of the brightest, had become feeble and beclouded. It is long since he ceased to act as guide to travellers; but those who have read the “Heidenmauer” often go to see him, and he appeared much pleased when told that his name was known both in England and America. No doubt his walk with Cooper over the Heidenmauer has proved to him a considerable source of profit as well as fame.

We now hastened to quit the *Vier Jahres-Zeiten*; the more so, because the Dürkheimers had again assembled in the dining-room, and filled it with a portentous cloud of smoke. They were at their early dinner. It is curious in the small towns of Germany what numbers of the tradespeople, instead of dining and supping with their families, resort to the inn, as to a club. Nothing can be more singular to an English eye, than one of those smoking companies; and never did we see a more curious one than here. At the long table sat two rows of men, many of a remarkably heavy, shaggy, uncouth appearance, with rough heads of hair, and coarse pent-houses of bristly moustaches to their mouths. Each was armed with a long pipe, many of them so long that their heads reached down under the table. Along the table stood small, square decanters of wine, each holding about a choppin, or pint, and glasses with spills in them. Most solemn and heavy were the visages facing each other, yet loud was the clamour of voices, and stupendous the volumes of smoke. Cooper says, that the Ox in his time was no smoking rendezvous, the Four Seasons was even as here described. Out of doors the change was not so great. There were the same spacious gardens, with their fountain, their shady walks, their alcoves, and their billiard-room, with its great, strange, fresco paintings: and in the court-yard stalked a sage-looking, tame stork.

A FURTHER DRIVE AMONGST THE VINEYARDS.

Presently our carriage was ready, and we dashed away over the vine-clad plains, producing some of the most celebrated wines of Germany, as Deidesheimer, Forster Traminer, Wachenheimer, etc.; on our right the wild

hills of the Haardt, their summits covered with wood, and, ever and anon, narrow valleys opening in them, revealing beautiful scenes beyond. The castle of Hambach, on its lofty position, reminded us of the Radical gatherings there in 1832, when they hoisted the tricolor on the ruined towers of the Emperor Henry IV., which had seen 800 years of wars and changes.

Over wretched roads, and through villages more pleasant to look on in the distance than close at hand—heavy, ill-built and dirty, bearing all the marks of belonging to a neglected province—we passed the sweetly-situated town of Neustadt, and stopped to dine at the large village of Edenkoben. Here preparations were making for a great fair, in which the greatest quantity of coopers wares was displayed that we ever saw at one time. This consisted of tubs of all sizes, all of white deal, from the smallest in which the scullions wash their dishes, to those of vast capacity. Scores of wagon-loads had arrived and were arriving, probably brought hither before the vintage to supply the whole country round. It was impossible to witness the preparations for this fair without wondering at the different ideas attached to the word “pleasure.” As one man’s meat is said to be another man’s poison, so one man’s pleasure may be pronounced another man’s misery. Here was a piece of newly-ploughed ground preparing obviously for the grand scene of entertainment. It was enclosed with green boughs; there were erections of green boughs, and banks of wet earth raised in them for seats. Here the country population for many miles round were to assemble, drink up the worst wine of the last vintage, waltz till they were tired, wade in the mud of the new-ploughed field, and think it pleasure!

TRIFELS AND THE VOSGES.

Annweiler, in the Vosges, our destination, we reached in the evening, just with light enough left to see that it was as ugly and dirty a little town as any we had passed through, but that it was situated in a country as strikingly beautiful. It abounded with rich and well-cultivated valleys, with orchards, green meadows, and old picturesque mills, lying amongst lofty and finely-wooded hills. The summits of these hills showed themselves in isolated and stern crags frowning from amongst their trees, and others standing aloft like old castles. The rocks are of red sandstone, from which the rains and tempests have washed down the earth in the course of ages, leaving the naked and gigantic masses of stone standing on high in Titanic grandeur. The hills, clothed all over their sides with forests, rise in conical forms, and on some of their summits, perched on precipitous crags, are ruined castles. These shattered castles are so like the crags themselves, and the crags so like ruins of castles, that on approaching them it is difficult to tell which are ruins and which are rocks. These conical mountains and their crowning crags and castles arrest your attention long before you reach them, and when you do arrive amongst them, nothing can be more wildly beautiful. They look like the colossal works of a gigantic race in some far-off and savage time. One crag, in particular, stands on a bare hill with a bulk so huge, so lofty, and so savage in its aspect, that you can with difficulty persuade yourself that it is the mere work of nature.

On the hill overlooking the town stands the remains of the castle of Trifels, in which Richard Cœur de Lion spent, it is supposed, about a year of his captivity in Ger-

many. The story of Richard's romantic adventures in returning from the Crusades, of his seizure by Leopold, Duke of Austria, his captivity and delivery, have furnished a favourite theme both to the historian and the romancer. Richard was one of the bravest, and at the same time one of the most imprudent monarchs that ever sate on any throne. He was the Achilles of the feudal ages. Brave and generous, he was still sufficiently distinguished by the savage cruelty of his age. Witness the cool massacre of two thousand of captive Saracens before Acre. Rash and impetuous, he had contrived to make enemies of almost every one of the princes with whom he was engaged in the Crusade. He had mortally offended the King of France by refusing to marry his sister, and casting reflections on her honour. He had torn down the banner of Leopold of Austria from the tower of the castle of Acre, and he had made Conrad, Marquis of Montferrat, his implacable foe, by deciding against him and in favour of Guy of Lusignan, as King of Jerusalem. In returning to Europe it would have been the object of a man of common prudence to avoid the territories of each and all of these princes. His wife and sister embarked in one vessel and reached home in safety; but Richard, from some whim, embarking in another vessel, on approaching Sicily, where a friendly prince reigned, took some strange fear of falling into the power of the King of France, and rushed into the very lion's mouth. He sailed up the Adriatic, and landed at Goritz in Carinthia, the governor of which was a near kinsman of the Marquis of Montferrat. Here Richard disguised himself as a merchant-pilgrim from Jerusalem, and sent a page to demand a passport from the governor, presenting him with a valuable ring. The governor immediately pronounced the ring to be the gift of a prince, and not of a merchant, and the merchant to be the King

of England! Alarmed at this, Richard only rushed further into danger. Leaving all attendants behind but his page, he spurred right away into Germany, and approached within a few miles of Vienna itself, the capital of his mortal foe, Duke Leopold. He had on his progress through Austria been already once recognised by a Norman knight in the service of another relative of Conrad of Montferrat, yet he now sent his page into Vienna to procure provisions. The boy, supplied with abundance of money and richly dressed, immediately excited attention. It was now rumoured far and wide that King Richard was crossing Germany in disguise, and a thousand keen eyes were on the look out for his discovery. He himself, worn out by his rapid flight, and the privations and anxieties attending it, was lying ill at the village of Erperg. His safety depended entirely on the secrecy which he should preserve till he was able to proceed; but scorning caution, he again sent the boy to Vienna for supplies of food, where he was discovered by having thoughtlessly stuck in his girdle a pair of such gloves as were worn only by princes. The house in which Richard lay was surrounded by soldiers, and he found himself in the hands of his bitter enemy, Leopold of Austria. Leopold consigned him to the castle of Dürrenstein, on the Danube, a stronghold situated in one of the most stern and craggy places imaginable. Here the Emperor of Germany laid claim to him as an imperial prisoner. Richard was a rich prize for these needy and ferocious princes, and they fell to wrangling for the possession of him. He was eventually made over to the emperor for a certain sum, who wrote exultingly to the King of France that the disturber of the empire, the enemy of France, was safe in his possession, lodged in one of his castles, and watched over night and day by trusty guards with drawn words.

The wonder and the mystery of Richard's disappearance was now at an end. All Europe was startled at this unprincely act. Richard was regarded throughout the civilised world as the champion of Christendom. Indignation was everywhere expressed at his treatment. The Pope at once excommunicated Leopold, and threatened the emperor with the same chastisement if he did not set the English king at liberty. In England, spite of the disloyalty of John, the bishops met and despatched to Richard the Abbots of Broxley and Pont-Robert. Longchamp, whom Richard had left as the chief manager of his affairs, but who had been displaced by John, was soon with him, and the emperor was compelled to bring Richard before the Diet openly at Hagenau, where, though he was accused of various atrocious crimes, he most eloquently and indignantly defended himself. The base emperor was compelled to give him up, but not before he had bargained for 150,000 marks of pure silver for himself and Leopold—of which they got 70,000 down.

Richard was about fourteen months in confinement, one half of which or more he seems to have passed at Trifels. There has been much romance and poetry expended over his supposed discovery here by Blondel, his minstrel. Of this, however, history clears nothing up. Some deny that Blondel discovered Richard at all, others that he found him here. But the story is surrounded with difficulties. If Blondel discovered him anywhere, it should have been at Dürrenstein, for it was only during his detention there that his fate was unknown. There for a time it might be advisable to keep his captivity a secret, till the avaricious princes had settled their conflicting claims for his possession, that once settled, there could be no further motive for concealment. The emperor himself seems to have been

the first to confess to the King of France that Richard was in his possession, and Richard must then have been at Trifels, as it was one of the state prisons of the empire. So soon as the fact of his detention at all by the emperor was known, the abbots despatched from England, and the chancellor Longchamp, seem to have had no difficulty in finding him. At Trifels, indeed, it was the interest of the emperor to let it be known where he was, as he was looking out for his ransom, and Richard himself was writing to England to urge on the tardy movements of his friends.

However, at Trifels, it is generally asserted by the romance-writers, that Blondel discovered him by singing a favourite air of Richard's, and hearing him take up the response. Perhaps Blondel might by this means discover the room in which he was confined, or might have been seeking him from castle to castle, and have first discovered that himself by these means, which had already become no secret in England. Trifels was not only a state prison of the empire, but so strong, that there the regalia was deposited. It was a favourite residence of the German emperors. There Barbarossa, and many other emperors, resided in much magnificence. Richard was confined there in 1193-4, and the castle was destroyed in the Thirty Years' War by the Swedes.

Spite of Richard's restless and impetuous temperament, and his deep sense of the baseness and indignity with which he was treated by the sordid German princes, he is said to have passed his time occasionally quite jovially. Though he was impatient of the slow movement of his subjects in his behalf, and irritated by the treachery and plotting of his wretched brother John to keep him confined for life, he sometimes occupied himself with music and

composition of Troubadour poetry, and at others amused himself with his keepers, joking, singing, and drinking with them to their great delight.

The rondeau by which Blondel is said to have discovered Richard is well known to most readers, but Richard's own poetry, written during his imprisonment, is much less so. The following stanzas are part of an appeal to his cousin, Count Guy of Auvergne, which was certainly written at Trifels, and near the end of his captivity, for he had been in prison, as he states, "winters twain," and his ransom had been already fixed. The stanzas are from Mr. Ellis's translation, for it is said that Richard rarely—Ritson says never—spoke a word of English:—

If captive wight attempt the tuneful strain,
 His voice, belike, full dolefully will sound;
 Yet, to the sad, 'tis comfort to complain.
 Friends have I store, and promises abound.
 Shame on the niggards! Since these winters twain,
 Unransomed, still I bear a tyrant's chain.

Full well they know, my lords and nobles all,
 Of England, Normandy, Guienne, Poictou,
 Ne'er did I slight my poorest vassals' call,
 But all, whom wealth could buy, from chains withdrew.
 Not in reproach I speak, nor idly vain,
 But I alone unpitied bear the chain.

My fate will show, "the dungeon and the grave
 Alike repell our kindred and our friends,"
 Here am I left, their paltry gold to save!
 Sad fate is mine, but worse their crime attends;
 Their lord will die; their conscience shall remain,
 To tell how long I wore this galling chain.

But the day of release came at length. In the month of February, 1194, the 70,000 marks being paid, Richard was set at liberty, and Philip of France wrote to the traitor-miscreant, John—"Take care of yourself, the devil is broken loose!" Such is the story of King Richard's captivity.

It was to see the place of that captivity, occurring

nearly 700 years ago, that brought us hither. Trifels was now looking down upon us in our inn, and in the morning we set out to it. The hill is lofty, steep, and clothed with wood. A winding road conducted us to the top, though not in less than a good half-hour's ascent. The castle, as you approach it, is a very striking object. First you follow a hollow stony road; near the summit you look up, and, over your head, see a stupendous rock frowning, pushing out a narrow but lofty point far into the air. Then, as you advance, your eye catches above you, amongst the trees, a tall, massy tower, and from it to another tower, springing a narrow, lofty arch, like a rainbow. The effect is pleasantly startling. You observe other walls above you, half-buried in trees, and as you move round the outer tower, the high, light rainbow arch comes finely into front view, and several flights of steps lead your eye upwards to where, on its elevated foundation of rock, soars aloft the castle itself.

The effect is noble. You see a large projecting window of fine workmanship, where you may, if you please, imagine Cœur de Lion listening, in joyful surprise, to the chanson of Blondel de Nesle. You hasten up the flights of steps, and stand in equal wonder at the splendid scenes which lie all beneath and around you, and at the majestic strength and eyrie-like position of this fine old fortress.

The scene is certainly one of the most beautiful and enchanting in nature. How different to the stern and iron-bound rocks of Dürrenstein! On three sides hills soar up around you at various distances, clothed in richest garniture of woods, their summits dignified and solemnised with those shattered towers or tower-like rocks we have already spoken of. Between these sink in softest falls and sweeps valleys, with all their flowing outlines softened and beautified with woods. At that moment, these wore the

richest hues of autumn. Here and there between them winds a narrow green strath, or a russet road carries its line along forest slopes, and disappears in depths where you would like to follow. Below you sink down dizzy precipices, where yet the draping ivy, the overhanging wild rose, break the horror of the sheer descent, and up which come the colossal tops of lofty trees, giving you at once a sense of elevation and of leafy beauty.

Below you, on one side, lies the town, looking hence most peaceful and picturesque, in the midst of its cultivated meadows and vineyards; and beyond it, the eye ranges for many miles over the chain of the Haardt Mountains, one great chaos of wild summits, and ridges, and rich hues. On the other side stretches out the great Rhine plain, with all its cities, its noble, winding river, and distant Alps. Lovely, however, as is the scene, it must in Cœur de Lion's time have been most wild and savage, and tended to impress upon his mind a feeling of the vast distance of his own land, and the settled conviction that nothing but the power of money could ever release him. In winter, it must be stern and wild to sublimity. At this season even, as we ascended to it, the winds swept through the woods with a rushing roar; leaves flew and whirled before them; clouds and mists caught and hung in ragged whiteness on the mountain sides, and around the dark red fells on their summits, till they were torn away again, and hurried far over the plain. And then, the winds dropping, down came deluges of rain, thick vapours settled in gloomy majesty on the woods, and streams dyed with the red earth, of which the whole surface is here composed, ran in sanguine torrents down to the vale.

A considerable part of the ancient fortress still remains. It is said that the room in which Richard was particularly

confined is well known, and is still shown to travellers: to our eye it appeared, however, rather like the Rittersaal, or a chapel. The walls are covered with inscriptions by visitors. The chief dungeon itself still remains, and is a deep and tremendous place, entered—as was so often the case in those horrible old feudal castles—from the top, and lit thence also. Remains of other dungeons also show themselves beneath the overhanging masses of rock on which the fortress is built. It is not to be supposed, however, that Richard was confined in any of these. His keepers, with whom his fame and convivial disposition made him a favourite, and who were, no doubt, as accessible to the smiles and money of a king as the rest of their tribe, would no doubt allow him all the liberty of the castle that was consistent with the security of so responsible a charge.

Altogether, Trifels is a most interesting place, both from the magnificence and strength of its situation, as well as from its many historical associations. The imprisonment of the English king is only one of its many facts. The annals of the empire furnish whole volumes of the stories of the unfortunate beings who, at various times, were immured here; many of them of high rank and consequence.

From Trifels we were strongly tempted to extend our journey into the neighbouring old-fashioned and picturesque district of the Ban de la Roche, the ancient Stein Thal, and the scene of the admirable Oberlin's labours; but as we had contemplated only a trip and not a tour, we turned our faces homewards, through the fortified town of Landau, and the ancient city of Speier, the burial-place of the olden German emperors.



NOVEMBER.

Spring's blossoms!
Summer's heat!
Autumn's riches!
Faith! but life is fleet!
Why, we are here
With another year,
All sad and drear,
Nearly counted out complete.
Nothing now but storms remains;
Nothing now but mire and rains:
Turgid rivers; winds in laughter;
And old Winter creeping after.
Creeping, weeping 'mid his cold;
'Mid the snow-storms on the wold;
'Mid freezing town and foggy moor,
With his hatred of the poor.

Darkness, starkness, hunger, woe—
 Winter, why so old and slow?
 All thy fellows, they are young,
 All immortal, fleet, and strong.
 We would have them ever stay;
 But so young, they hie away.
 Winter! why not young as they?
 Thou immortal, yet so old?
 Lord of death, and king of cold—
 Why not young, that thou mayst be,
 As rapid as thy kindred three?
 For around thy icy throne,
 The poor still pine, and shake, and groan;
 Find no pity
 In the city,
 Fruit in forest, food in field;
 Nothing that can comfort yield.
 “Hie thee hence!” their only ditty.
 Think on’t, Winter!—scorn to be
 So prodigal of thy loathed company.
 Or—old Winter, slow and chill,
 Bring us good as well as ill.
 Bring us fire, and bring us clothes;
 Books, and nooks of warm repose.
 Scatter food unto the rich,
 And to the beggar in the ditch.
 Don’t forget the thousand dwellers
 In Manchester’s dreary cellars.
 In halls, in huts, in barn and byre,
 Scatter food, and scatter fire.
 Bring us music and old tales;
 But waft cheap cotton on thy gales.
 Bring us labour that shall warm us;
 Bring us Hope once more to charm us.
 Bring Prosperity—and bring
 Back again thy daughter—Spring!

NOVEMBER, say the French, is the month in which Englishmen hang themselves. Perhaps so; but, unfortunately, the French, now-a-days, outdo us in suicide. Has the despairing influence of November stretched itself across the channel?—or, rather, where does not the influence of this gloomy month show itself? But it is not in fog and dirt, and rain and wind, that this depressing

influence exclusively resides: it is in the prospect of winter, with all its sufferings and privations.

In nature there is nothing melancholy.

In nature there is no season which has not its charms. To healthy frames and minds at ease, there will never cease to be inspiring music in the wild winds of November, as something that we love to gaze upon in the gloomy strife of the elements. How much poetry is there in the sound of tempests as we are seated over the evening fire; nay, the terrors of winter would be no terrors, if men were well provided for that season. On the contrary, all would delight, warmly clad, to rush forth into the clear, clasp air, and feel the blood tingle in the veins at the healthy influence of cold; would sally forth to the pleasures of skating, walking, riding, or the many duties which life in town and country presents. Who does not remember the pleasures and active labours of winters gone by, as amongst the most delightful portions of past life. No, truly—

In nature there is nothing melancholy.

God has framed us to draw enjoyment from every change that comes, and every wind that blows; but the fact is, that after nearly six thousand years that the world has stood, we have not yet learned to live. Providence still sends his "sun to shine on the just, and on the unjust;" he fills the world with enough for us all, but we cannot learn the simple lesson of dividing his blessings, so that each shall have his due portion. It is in our social arrangements that the mischief commences and the misery lies. Huge selfishness stands and snatches the portion of thousands. Every one is anxious to be, not well off, but enormously rich. The frenzy of gain grows desperate, and the whole machinery of society becomes not a machine of blessings, but of mangling and destruction. The

country is full of everything that can contribute to human comfort, but the million, in some mysterious way, cannot come at it. Every man is in the condition of Tantalus—plenty touches his lip, but cannot be brought within his teeth. We starve, with warehouses and shops loaded with provisions; and go half naked, with manufacturers in despair because they cannot sell their fabrics; we have everything, and can get nothing. Care sits and gnaws voraciously at every heart: he is the only thing that feeds.

Never is this state of things felt so much as at this season of the year. Who would not enjoy November if there were nothing but the clouds, and fogs, and storms of nature to dread? There are clouds, and fogs, and storms of social life that overwhelm us with sadness. True, the flowers are gone; the long grass stands amongst the woodland thickets withered, bleached, and sere; the fern is red and shrivelled amid the green gorse and broom; the plants which waved their broad white umbels to the summer breeze, like skeleton trophies of death, rattle their dry and hollow stalks to the autumnal winds. The brooks are brimful; the rivers, turbid and covered with masses of foam, hurry on in angry strength, or pour their waters over the champaign. Our very gardens are sad, damp, and desolate; their floral splendours are dead, and naked stems and decaying leaves have taken the place of verdure.

But what of that? If the heart be strong and sound, all the light and heat, the joy and beauty of the whole seasons have retreated with it, and in the very gloom and silence, amid fogs and winds and whirling leaves, it finds the food of intensest life, and the power of poetry. In its sternest moods, the season presents solemn thoughts, and awakens solemn feelings. Great philosophical minds have in all ages borne but one testimony to the charms of its quietude.

In the profound repose of the country at this season the mourner seeks to indulge the passion of grief, as a solemn luxury. In it the projector of some great work of art or literature labours to mature his plans, and, hidden from all eyes, to achieve that which shall make his name familiar to all ears. The mists that sweep over the moors, the clouds that hang on the mountains, the darkness that broods over sea or forest, give wings to the imagination, and clothe the passion of the musier with all the language and colours of sublimity.

No! there is no melancholy—no sadness there. It is when we turn to the crowded masses of living humanity that we perceive the suffering, and hear the wail of wretchedness. It is time that we awoke from this delusion of selfishness; that we made up our minds to be “men and brothers.” It is time that we set free our commerce, as God has set free his winds and waters, from the foundation of the world. And Heaven be praised we have now resolved to do that. In this we give the first evidences of progressive mind. All nature proclaims to us that it is in freedom that lies every man’s prosperity and every man’s strength. It is that freedom which covers the earth with plenty; it is our infatuated fondness for cunning schemes of policy, and wires and webs of restriction, which has turned all that plenty into poverty, nakedness, filth, crime, and death by suicide, and broken hearts. We have been ingenious in the manufacture of wretchedness. We have been pre-eminently successful in defeating all the bountiful intentions of Providence. We have laboured night and day for a large crop of starvation, for a huge return of bankruptcy. Behold the boasted science of modern times! Before men talked of political economy, they lived. They had roomy and quiet dwellings; simple, but abundant food; quaint, but cheap garbs; and in their lives they en-

joyed an almost perpetual portion of that peace and repose, for which no wealth or splendour can compensate, and which the multitude, without winning the splendour, lose from the cradle to the grave.

It were better to abandon our sciences and return to the simple ignorance of our ancestors, who exchanged what they did not want for that which they did, and were happy without custom-houses, long parliaments, Hansard's Reports, and lawyers who open, in this November term, a more terrific prospect for the wretched victims of a false state of things, than the worst winter that ever froze. But courage! a better day is dawning. All our educational labours; all our knowledge and Christianity shall not be lost. The cry of the poor in town and country; of the labourer, the mechanic, the ballast-heaver, the needlewoman, and the million toilers for a starvation pittance, is effectually gone forth. The gates of abundance are unlocked, and we once more at this season contemplate the farm, the cottage fire-side, or the little city tenement, with satisfaction. We shall once more hear the sound of the flail, and see the hardy labourer at his out-door work in the morning, clearing up ditches and fences, irrigating and foddering the cattle, with pleasure, for we shall know that the man is well off for food, and fuel, and clothing.

November leads in winter. Snows often set in towards the end of the month; and not man only, but the whole race of wild creatures have prepared for it. Moles have made up their nests for the winter. Frogs have sunk to the bottom of ponds and ditches, and buried themselves in mud and sleep. The lizard, the badger, the hedgehog, have crept into holes in the earth, and remain torpid till spring. The bats have hung themselves up by the heels in old barns, caves, and deserted buildings, and, wrapping themselves in the membranes of their fore-feet, doze winter

away. Squirrels, rats, and mice, shut themselves up in their winter stores; and the dormouse has betaken itself to slumber. How many of God's human creatures would rejoice to do the same!

It is now precisely the season to enjoy by the blaze of a good fire such narratives as the following:—

THE FOREST POOL.

It is a fearful place. It struck an awe
 Into my childish bosom, which does still
 Revive when I behold it. And yet there,
 Among my strolls, how often have I gone.
 Far in the woods it lay. A deep, dark pool,
 Shrouded with bushes, and o'erhung with trees,
 Which stretched across it their grey, mossy arms,
 That, as they perished, fell upon the leaves
 Of the broad water-lilies on its breast.
 The very trunks themselves, in the antiquity
 Of undisturbed years, bowed to its brim,
 Or were plunged headlong in its gloomy flood,
 Leading the thoughts into a horrid depth.
 It was a fearful place: and the dim shade,
 And solemn hush of the thick woods around,
 Made it more fearful. And yet, even here,
 Beauty, deep, solitary beauty dwelt.
 The timid-looking primrose did not fear
 The sombre place; but on its soily marge,
 Where other herb grew not, its verdant tufts
 Sprang thickly, and its thousand starry flowers
 Mixed with the distant wood anemonies
 Their luscious breath.

It was a pleasant sight,
 As Spring went on, to see those knotted trunks
 Put out their crisped leaves and odorous flowers
 In laughing contrast with their own grey moss,
 And with the place's gloom. To see the birds
 Come, pair by pair, and weave within their boughs
 Their summer homes. Under its hollow banks
 The blackbird and the wren would make their nests;
 Within the maze of twisted stumps and roots
 The chaffinch pitched its little silvery tent
 On a light bough; and loud the storm-cock sang
 Unto his love within the willow-tree.

It was a pleasant sight, lying at ease,

Breathing the tasselled honeysuckle's breath,
 To see within that shadowy solitude
 A sudden gush of sunshine make its way
 Through some high opening, and at once light up
 Each brooding nook, and every hoary branch,
 And in the bosom of the pool reveal,
 Down 'mid its lowest depths, a little world
 Of its own wonders.

Many a summer hour
 Was thus employed, exploring forest tracts
 Of verdant mosses, and strange plants, which sprung
 Up from the green abyss. Once as I lay,
 Humming in idlest bliss a careless tune,
 Oh God! how suddenly my song did cease!
 There was a sight! I feel the freezing chill,
 Even now, which seized me; forcing from my heart
 A groan of horror. In the watery gulf,
 Where waved that green and slippery mass of weeds,
 Something was seen, pointing up towards me—
 A human hand! I started—but the thought
 That fear, perchance, had moulded to that shape
 The blackened branch of some engulfed tree,
 Stayed me a moment. Down again I gazed,
 And in that gaze I saw enough to put
 Fear in my heart, and speed into my limbs,
 Such as I knew not, till I knew them then.

“What was it?” ask'st thou. Oh! a common thing!
 Such as the city hears of day by day,
 And heeds not. As the city bridge beholds,
 And the dark surging flood beneath it knows—
 But men think little of. 'Twas but a life—
 A human life—one of ten million lives—
 The life of one though young and beautiful,
 Yet but a woman, and a peasant woman.

I stood amid the throng as forth they drew
 The pale corpse from the deep. I stood and heard.
 Loud were the shrieks pealed from the hearts of women,
 As came the form to light; and manifold
 Were the conjectures of this deed and cause.
 Some gravely talked of an untimely grief;
 Some thought it owing to a fit of love.
 But love! Why, she was but a child. Her years
 Were but sixteen. She was a beautiful thing,
 Yet but a beautiful child. She had the air
 Of happy childhood, with a happy heart;
 And she had sprung as springs a wild May flower
 In a delicious meadow, 'mid a throng
 Of its own tribe, and never sees a cloud.

Howe'er it was, time passed, and she was buried,
And her sad fate became a fireside tale;
And the dread Forest Pool was thenceforth shunned.

But o'er thy bridge, great London, rolls the tide
Of hugest human life—and in the tide
Beneath it die the wretched—one by one—
Yet no one heeds it: and no ghost doth haunt
That place of death—like the lone Forest Pool.
For life is there too mighty, too intense;
And the vast host of Mammon tramples down
The wretch's groan, and scorneth spectral woe.

THE HAUNTED HOUSE IN CHARNWOOD FOREST.

One fine, blustering, autumn day, a quiet and venerable-looking old gentleman might be seen, with stick in hand, taking his way through the streets of Leicester. If any one had followed him, they would have found him directing his steps towards that side of the town which leads to Charnwood. The old gentleman, who was a Quaker, took his way leisurely, but thoughtfully, stopping every now and then to see what the farmers' men were about, who were ploughing up the stubbles to prepare for another year's crop. He paused, also, at this and that farm-house, evidently having a pleasure in the sight of good fat cattle, and in the flocks of poultry—fowls, ducks, geese, and turkeys, busy about the barn-door, where the sound of the flail, or the swipple, as they there term it, was already heard busily knocking out the corn of the last bountiful harvest. Our old friend—a Friend,—for though you, dear reader, do not know him, he was both at the time we speak of;—our old friend, again trudging on, would pause on the brow of a hill, at a stile, or on some rustic bridge, casting its little obliging arch over a brooklet, and inhale the fresh autumnal air; and after looking round him, nod to himself, as if to say, “Ay, all good, all beautiful!” and so he went on again. But it would not be long before he

would be arrested again by clusters of rich, jetty blackberries, hanging from some old hawthorn hedge; or by clusters of nuts, hanging by the wayside, through the copse. In all these natural beauties our old wayfarer seemed to have the enjoyment of a child. Blackberries went into his mouth, and nuts into his pockets; and so, with a quiet, inquiring, and thoughtful, yet thoughtfully cheerful, look, the good old man went on.

He seemed bound for a long walk, and yet to be in no hurry. In one place he stopped to talk to a very old labourer, who was clearing out a ditch; and if you had been near, you would have heard that their discourse was of the past days, and the changes in that part of the country, which the old labourer thought were very much for the worse. And worse they were for him: for formerly he was young and full of life; and now he was old and nearly empty of life. Then he was buoyant, sang songs, made love, went to wakes and merry-makings; now his wooing days, and his marrying days, and his married days were over. His good old dame, who in those young, buxom days was a round-faced, rosy, plump, and light-hearted damsel, was dead, and his children were married, and had enough to do. In those days, the poor fellow was strong and lusty, had no fear and no care; in these, he was weak and tottering; had been pulled and harassed a thousand ways; and was left, as he said, like an old dry kex—*i.e.*, a hemlock or cow-parsnip stalk, hollow and dry, to be knocked down and trodden into the dust some day.

Yes, sure enough, those past days *were* much better days than these days were to him. No comparison. But Mr. John Basford, our old wanderer, was taking a more cheerful view of things, and telling the nearly worn-out labourer, that when the night came there followed morning, and that the next would be a heavenly morning,

shining on hills of glory, on waters of life, on cities of the blest, where no sun rose, and no sun set; and where every joyful creature of joyful youth, who had been dear to him, and true to him and God, would again meet him, and make times such as should cause songs of praise to spring out of his heart, just as flowers spring out of a vernal tree in the rekindled warmth of the sun.

The old labourer leaned reverently on his spade as the worthy man talked to him. His grey locks, uncovered at his labour by any hat, were tossed in the autumn wind. His dim eye was fixed on the distant sky, that rolled its dark masses of clouds on the gale, and the deep wrinkles of his pale and feeble temples seemed to grow deeper at the thoughts passing within him. He was listening as to a sermon, which brought together his youth and his age; his past and his future; and there were verified on that spot words which Jesus Christ spoke nearly two thousand years ago—"Wherever two or three are met together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

He was in the midst of the two only. There was a temple there in those open fields, sanctified by two pious hearts, which no ringing of bells, no sound of solemn organ, nor voice of congregated prayers, nor any preacher but the ever-present and invisible One, who there and then fulfilled His promise and was gracious, could have made more holy.

Our old friend again turned to set forward; he shook the old labourer kindly by the hand, and there was a gaze of astonishment in the old man's face—the stranger had not only cheered him by his words, but left something to cheer him when he was gone.

The Friend now went on with a more determined step. He skirted the memorable park of Bradgate, famous for the abode of Lady Jane Grey, and the visit of her school-

master, Roger Ascham. He went on into a region of woods and hills. At some seven or eight miles from Leicester, he drew near a solitary farm-house, within the ancient limits of the forest of Charnwood. It was certainly a lonely place amid the woodlands and the wild autumn fields. Evening was fast dropping down; and as the shade of night fell on the scene, the wind tossed more rushingly the boughs of the thick trees, and roared down the rocky valley. John Basford went up to the farm-house, however, as if that was the object of his journey, and a woman opening it at his knock, he soon disappeared within.

Now our old friend was a perfect stranger here; had never been here before; had no acquaintance nor actual business with the inhabitants, though any one watching his progress hither would have been quite satisfied that he was not wandering without an object. But he merely stated that he was somewhat fatigued with his walk from the town, and requested leave to rest awhile. In such a place, such a request is readily, and even gladly granted.

There was a cheerful fire burning on a bright, clean hearth. The kettle was singing on the hob for tea, and the contrast of the in-door comfort was sensibly heightened by the wild gloom without. The farmer's wife, who had admitted the stranger, soon went out, and called her husband from the fold-yard. He was a plain, hearty sort of man; gave our friend a hearty shake of the hand, sate down, and began to converse. A little time seemed to establish a friendly interest between the stranger and the farmer and his wife. John Basford asked whether they would allow him to smoke a pipe, which was not only readily accorded, but the farmer joined him. They smoked and talked alternately of the country and the town, Leicester being the farmer's market, and as familiar to him as his own

neighbourhood. He soon came to know, too, who his guest was, and expressed much pleasure in the visit. Tea was carried into the parlour, and thither they all adjourned, for now the farming men were coming into the kitchen, where they sate, for the evening.

Tea over, the two gentlemen again had a pipe, and the conversation wandered over a multitude of things and people known to both.

But the night was come down pitch dark, wild, and windy, and old John Basford had to return to Leicester.

“To Leicester!” exclaimed at once man and wife; “to Leicester!” No such thing. He must stay where he was;—where could he be better?

John Basford confessed that that was true; he had great pleasure in conversing with them; but then, was it not an unwarrantable liberty to come to a stranger’s house, and make thus free?

“Not in the least,” the farmer replied; “the freer the better!”

The matter thus was settled, and the evening wore on; but in the course of the evening, the guest, whose simple manner, strong sense, and deeply pious feeling, had made a most favourable impression on his entertainers, hinted that he had heard some strange rumours regarding this house, and that, in truth, had been the cause which had attracted him thither. He had heard, in fact, that a particular chamber in this house was haunted; and he had for a long time felt a growing desire to pass a night in it. He now begged this favour might be granted him.

As he had opened this subject, an evident cloud, and something of an unpleasant surprise, had fallen on the countenances of both man and wife. It deepened as he proceeded; the farmer had withdrawn his pipe from his mouth, and laid it on the table; and the woman had

risen, and looked uneasily at their guest. The moment that he uttered the wish to sleep in the haunted room, both exclaimed in the same instant against it.

“No, never!” they exclaimed; “never, on any consideration! They had made a firm resolve on that point, which nothing would induce them to break through.”

The guest expressed himself disappointed, but did not press the matter further at the moment. He contented himself with turning the conversation quietly upon this subject, and after a while found the farmer and his wife confirm to him everything that he had heard. Once more then, and as incidentally, he expressed his regret that he could not gratify the curiosity which had brought him so far; and, before the time for retiring arrived, again ventured to express how much what he had now heard had increased his previous desire to pass a night in that room. He did not profess to believe himself invulnerable to fears of such a kind, but was curious to convince himself of the actual existence of spiritual agency of this character.

The farmer and his wife steadily refused. They declared that others who had come with the same wish, and had been allowed to gratify it, had suffered such terrors as had made their after-lives miserable. The last of these guests was a clergyman, who received such a fright that he sprang from his bed at midnight, had descended, gone into the stable, and saddling his horse, had ridden away at full speed. Those things had caused them to refuse, and that firmly, any fresh experiment of the kind.

The spirit visitation was described to be generally this: At midnight, the stranger sleeping in that room would hear the latch of the door raised, and would in the dark perceive a light step enter, and, as with a stealthy tread, cross the room, and approach the foot of the bed. The

curtains would be agitated, and something would be perceived mounted on the bed, and proceeding up it, just upon the body of the person in it. The supernatural visitant would then stretch itself full length on the person of the agitated guest, and the next moment he would feel an oppression at his chest, as of a nightmare, and something extremely cold would touch his face.

At this crisis, the terrified guest would usually utter a fearful shriek, and often go into a swoon. The whole family would be roused from their beds by the alarm; but on no occasion had any traces of the cause of terror been found, though the house, on such occasions, had been diligently and thoroughly searched. The annoying visit was described as being by no means uniform. Sometimes it would not take place for a very long time, so that they would begin to hope that there would be no more of it; but it would, when least expected, occur again. Few people of late years, however, had ventured to sleep in that room, and never since the aforementioned clergyman was so terribly alarmed, about two years ago, had it once been occupied.

“Then,” said John Basford, “it is probable that the annoyance is done with for ever. If the troublesome visitant was still occasionally present it would, no doubt, take care to manifest itself in some mode or place. It was necessary to test the matter to see whether this particular room was still subject to so strange a phenomenon.”

This seemed to have an effect on the farmer and his wife. The old man urged his suit all the more earnestly, and, after further show of extreme reluctance on the part of his entertainers, finally prevailed.

The consent once being given, the farmer's wife retired to make the necessary arrangements. Our friend heard sundry goings to and fro; but at length it was announced

to him that all was ready; the farmer and his wife both repeating that they would be much better pleased if Mr. Barsford would be pleased to sleep in some other room. The old man, however, remained firm to his purpose; he was shown to his chamber, and the maid who led the way stood at some distance from the denoted door, and pointing to it, bade him good night, and hurried away.

Mr. Basford found himself alone in the haunted room. He looked round, and discovered nothing that should make it differ from any other good and comfortable chamber, or that should give to some invisible agent so singular a propensity to disturb any innocent mortal that nocturnated in it. Whether he felt any nervous terrors, we know not; but as he was come to see all that would or could occur there, he kept himself most vigilantly awake. He lay down in a very good feather bed, extinguished his light, and waited in patience. Time and tide, as they will wait for no man, went on. All sounds of life ceased in the house; nothing could be heard but the rushing wind without, and the bark of the yard-dog occasionally amid the laughing blast. Midnight came, and found John Basford wide-awake and watchfully expectant. Nothing stirred, but he lay still on the watch. At length—was it so? Did he hear a rustling movement, as it were, near his door, or was it his excited fancy? He raised his head from his pillow, and listened intensely. Hush! there is something!—no!—it was his contagious mind ready to hear and see—what? There was an actual sound of the latch! He could hear it raised! He could not be mistaken. There was a sound as if his door was cautiously opened. List! it was true. There were soft, stealthy footsteps on the carpet; they came directly towards the bed; they paused at its foot; the curtains were agitated; there were steps on the bed; something crept—did not the

heart and the very flesh of the rash old man now creep too?—and upon him sank a palpable form, palpable from its pressure, for the night was dark as an oven. There was a heavy weight on his chest, and in the same instant something almost icy cold touched his face.

With a sudden, convulsive action, the old man suddenly flung up his arms, clutched at the terrible object which thus oppressed him, and shouted with a loud cry,

“I have got him! I have got him!”

There was a sound as of a deep growl, a vehement struggle, but John Basford held fast his hold, and felt that he had something within it huge, shaggy, and powerful. Once more he raised his voice loud enough to have roused the whole house; but it seemed no voice of terror, but one of triumph and satisfaction. In the next instant, the farmer rushed into the room with a light in his hand, and revealed to John Basford that he held in his arms the struggling form of a huge Newfoundland dog!

“Let him go, sir, in God’s name!” exclaimed the farmer, on whose brow drops of real anguish stood, and glistened in the light of the candle. “Down stairs, Cæsar!” and the dog, released from the hold of the Quaker, departed as if much ashamed.

In the same instant, the farmer and his wife, who now also came in dressed, and evidently never having been to bed, were on their knees by the bedside.

“You know it all, sir,” said the farmer; “you see through it. You were too deep and strong-minded to be imposed on. We were, therefore, afraid of this when you asked to sleep in this room. Promise us now, that while we live you will never reveal what you know?”

They then related to him, that this house and chamber had never been haunted by any other than this dog, which had been trained to play the part. That, for generations,

their family had lived on this farm; but some years ago, their landlord having suddenly raised their rent to an amount that they felt they could not give, they were compelled to think of quitting the farm. This was to them an insuperable source of grief. It was the place that all their lives and memories were bound up with. They were extremely cast down. Suddenly it occurred to them to give an ill name to the house. They hit on this scheme, and, having practised it well, did not long want an opportunity of trying it. It had succeeded beyond their expectations. The fears of their guests were found to be of a force which completely blinded them to any discovery of the truth. There had been occasions where they thought some clumsy accident must have stripped away the delusion; but no! there seemed a thick veil of blindness, a fascination of terror cast over the strongest minds, which nothing could pierce through. Case after case occurred; and the house and farm acquired such a character, that no money or consideration of any kind would have induced a fresh tenant to live there. The old tenants continued at their old rent; and the comfortable ghost stretched himself every night in a capacious kennel, without any need of disturbing his slumbers by calls to disturb those of the guests of the haunted chamber.

Having made this revelation, the farmer and his wife again implored their guest to preserve their secret.

He hesitated.

“Nay,” said he, “I think it would not be right to do that. That would be to make myself a party to a public deception. It would be a kind of fraud on the world and the landlord. It would serve to keep up those superstitious terrors which should be as speedily as possible dissipated.”

The farmer was in agony. He rose, and strode to and fro in the room. His countenance grew red and wrathful.

He cast dark glances at his guest, whom his wife continued to implore, and who sate silent, and, as it were, lost in reflection.

“And do you think it a right thing, sir,” said the farmer, “thus to force yourself into a stranger’s house and family, and, in spite of the strongest wishes expressed to the contrary, into his very chambers; and that only to do him a mischief? Is that your religion, sir? I thought you had something better in you than that. Am I now to think your mildness and piety were only so much hypocrisy put on to ruin me?”

“Nay, friend, I don’t want to ruin thee,” said the Quaker.

“But ruin me you will, though, if you publish this discovery. Out I must turn, and be the laughing-stock of the whole country to boot. Now, if that is what you mean, say so, and I shall know what sort of a man you are. Let me know at once whether you are an honest man or a cockatrice?”

“My friend,” said the Quaker, “canst thou call thyself an honest man, in practising this deception for all these years, and depriving thy landlord of the rent he would otherwise have got from another? And dost thou think it would be honest in me to assist in the continuance of this fraud?”

“I rob the landlord of nothing,” replied the farmer. “I pay a good, fair rent; but I don’t want to quit the old spot. And if you had not thrust yourself into this affair, you would have had nothing to lay on your conscience concerning it. I must, let me tell you, look on it as a piece of unwarrantable impertinence to come thus to my house and be kindly treated only to turn Judas against me.”

The word Judas seemed to hit the Friend a great blow.

“A Judas!”

“Yes—a Judas! a real Judas!” exclaimed the wife. “Who could have thought it!”

“Nay, nay,” said the old man. “I am no Judas. It is true, I forced myself into it; and if you pay the landlord an honest rent, why, I don’t know that it is any business of mine—at least while you live.”

“That is all we want,” replied the farmer, his countenance changing, and again flinging himself by his wife on his knees by the bed. “Promise us never to reveal it while we live, and we shall be quite satisfied. We have no children, and when we go, those may come to th’ old spot who will.”

“Promise me never to practise this trick again,” said John Basford.

“We promise faithfully,” rejoined both farmer and wife.

“Then I promise too,” said the Friend, “that not a whisper of what has passed here shall pass my lips during your lifetime.”

With warmest expressions of thanks, the farmer and his wife withdrew; and John Basford, having cleared the chamber of its mystery, lay down and passed one of the sweetest nights he ever enjoyed.

The farmer and his wife lived a good many years after this, but they both died before Mr. Basford; and after their death, he related to his friends the facts which are here detailed. He, too, has passed, years ago, to his longer night in the grave, and to the clearing up of greater mysteries than that of—the Haunted House of Charnwood Forest.

We have, in different portions of this work, introduced the old and the young squire, the farmer’s daughter, and the country schoolmaster, as characters the most striking in the scenes we have presented. There is yet another of the

most prominent actors in the rural world, and who of late years has assumed a peculiar distinctness in the public eye. Him we shall now sketch, as he sits by the huge wood-fire of the farm-house—and though it be a haunted one, rubs his shins and sleeps. His day's work is done. He dreams confusedly of his team, his next ploughing-match, and some Dolly Cowcabbage or other. He sees some toil at five pounds a-year, which he thinks not so bad with Dolly standing at the door; but then behind comes up a long train of rent, winters without work, and parish-unions. But let us take a nearer view of him.

THE ENGLISH PEASANT.

The English Peasant is generally reckoned a very simple, monotonous animal; and most people, when they have called him a clown, or a country-hob, think they have described him. If you see a picture of him, he is a long, silly-looking fellow, in a straw hat, a white slop, and a pair of ankle-boots, with a bill in his hand—just as the London artist sees him in the juxta-metropolitan districts; and that is the English peasant. They who have gone farther into England, however, than Surrey, Kent, or Middlesex, have seen the English peasant in some different costume, under a good many different aspects; and they who will take the trouble to recollect what they have heard of him, will find him a rather multifarious creature. He is, in truth, a very Protean personage. What is he, in fact? A day-labourer, a woodman, a ploughman, a wagoner, a collier, a worker in railroad and canal making, a gamekeeper, a poacher, an incendiary, a charcoal-burner, a keeper of village ale-houses and Tom-and-Jerrys; a tramp, a pauper, pacing sullenly in the court-yard of a parish-union, or working in his

frieze jacket on some parish-farm; a boatman, a road-side stone-breaker, a quarryman, a journeyman brick-layer, or his clerk; a shepherd, a drover, a rat-catcher, a mole-catcher, and a hundred other things; in any one of which, he is as different from the sheepish, straw-hatted and ankle-booted, bill-holding fellow of the print-shop windows, as a cockney is from a Newcastle keelman.

In the matter of costume only, every different district presents him in a different shape. In the counties round London, eastward and westward, through Berkshire, Hampshire, Wiltshire, etc., he is the *white-slopped* man of the London prints, with a longish, rosy-cheeked face, and a stupid, quiet manner. In Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire, and in that direction, he sports his *olive-green* slop, and his wide-awake, larking hat, bit-o'-blood, or whatever else the hatters call those round-crowned, turned-up-brimmed felts of eighteen-pence or two shillings cost, which have of late years so wonderfully taken the fancy of the country-chaps. In the Midland Counties, especially Leicestershire, Derby, Nottingham, Warwick, and Staffordshires, he dons a *blue-slop*, called the Newark frock, which is finely gathered in a square piece of puckerment on the back and breast, on the shoulders and at the wrists; is adorned also, in those parts, with flourishes of white thread, and as invariably has a little white heart stitched in at the bottom of the slit at the neck. A man would not think himself a man, if he had not one of those slops, which are the first things that he sees at a market or a fair, hung aloft at the end of the slop-vendor's stall, on a crossed pole, and waving about like a scarecrow in the wind.

Under this he generally wears a coarse blue jacket, a red or yellow shag waistcoat, stout blue worsted stockings, tall laced ankle-boots, and corduroy breeches or trousers.

A red handkerchief round his neck is his delight, with two good long ends dangling in front. In many other parts of the country, he wears no slop at all, but a corduroy or fustian jacket, with capacious pockets, and buttons of giant size.

That is his every-day, work-a-day style; but see him on a Sunday, or a holiday—see him turn out to church, wake, or fair—there's a *beau* for you! If he has not his best slop on, which has never yet been defiled by touch of labour, he is conspicuous in his blue, brown, or olive-green coat, and waistcoat of glaring colour—scarlet, or blue, or green striped—but it must be showy; and a pair of trousers, generally blue, with a width nearly as ample as a sailor's, and not only guiltless of the foppery of being strapped down, but if he find the road rather dirty, or the grass dewy, they are turned up three or four inches at the bottom, so as to show the lining. On those days, he has a hat of modern shape, that has very lately cost him four-and-sixpence; and if he fancy himself rather handsome, or stands well with the women, he cocks it a little on one side, and wears it with a knowing air. He wears the collar of his coarse shirt up on a holiday, and his flaming handkerchief round his neck puts forth dangling ends of an extra length, like streamers. The most troublesome business of a full-dress day is to know what to do with his hands. He is dreadfully at a loss where to put them. On other days, they have plenty of occupation with their familiar implements, but to-day they are miserably sensible of a vacuum; and, except he be very old, he wears no gloves. They are sometimes diving into his trouser-pockets, sometimes into his waistcoat-pocket, and at others into his coat-pockets behind, turning his laps out like a couple of tails.

The great remedy for this inconvenience is a stick, or

a switch; and in the corner of his cottage, between the clock-case and the wall, you commonly see a stick of a description that indicates its owner. It is an ash-plant, with a face cut on its knob; or a thick hazel, which a woodbine has grown tightly round, and raised on it a spiral, serpentine swelling; or it is a switch, that is famous for cutting off the heads of thistles, docks, and nettles, as he goes along.

The women, in their paraphernalia, generally bear a nearer resemblance to their sisters of the town; the village dressmaker undertaking to put them into the very newest fashion which has reached that part of the country; and truly, were it not for the genuine country manner in which their clothes are thrown on, they might pass very well, too, at the market.

But the old men and old women, they are of the ancient world, truly. There they go, tottering and stooping along to church! It is now their longest journey. The old man leans heavily on his stout stick. His thin white hair covers his shoulders; his coat, with large steel buttons, and square-cut collar, has an antique air; his breeches are of leather, and worn bright with age, standing up at the knees, like the lids of tankards; and his loose shoes have large steel buckles. By his side, comes on his old dame, with her little, old-fashioned black bonnet; her gown, of a large flowery pattern, pulled up through the pocket-hole, showing a well-quilted petticoat, black stockings, high-heeled shoes, and large buckles also. She has on a black-mode cloak, edged with old-fashioned lace, carefully darned; or if winter, her warm red cloak, with a narrow edging of fur down the front. You see, in fancy, the oaken chest in which that drapery has been kept for the last half century; and you wonder who is to wear it next. Not their children—for the fashions of this world

are changed; they must be cut down into primitive raiment for the grandchildren.

But who says the English peasant is dull and unvaried in his character? To be sure, he has not the wild wit, the voluble tongue, the reckless fondness for laughing, dancing, carousing, and shillalaying of the Irish peasant; nor the grave, plodding habits and intelligence of the Scotch one. He may be said, in his own phraseology, to be "betwixt and between." He has wit enough when it is wanted; he can be merry enough when there is occasion; he is ready for a row when his blood is well up; and he will take to his book, if you will give him a schoolmaster. What is he, indeed, but the rough block of English character? Hew him out of the quarry of ignorance; dig him out of the slough of everlasting labour; chisel him, and polish him; and he will come out whatever you please. What is the stuff of which your armies have been chiefly made, but this English peasant? Who won your Cressys, your Agincourts, your Quebecs, your Indies, East and West, and your Waterloos, but the English peasant, trimmed and trained into the game-cock of war? How many of them have been carried off to man your fleets, to win your Camperdowns and Trafalgars? and when they came ashore again, were no longer the simple, slouching Simons of the village; but jolly tars, with rolling gait, quid in mouth, glazed hats, with crowns of one inch high, and brims of five wide, and with as much glib slang, and glib money to treat the girls with, as any Jack of them all.

Cowper has drawn a capital picture of the ease and perfection with which the clownish chrysalis may be metamorphosed into the scarlet moth of war. Catch the animal young, and you may turn him into any shape you please. He will learn to wear silk stockings, scarlet plush breeches, collarless coats, with silver buttons; and swing

open a gate with a grace, or stand behind my lady's carriage with his wand, as smoothly impudent as any of the tribe. He will clerk it with a pen behind his ear; or mount a pulpit, as Stephen Duck, the thresher, did, if you will only give him the chance. The fault is not in him, it is in fortune. He has rich fallows in his soul, if anybody thought them worth turning. But keep him down, and don't press him too hard; feed him pretty well, and give him plenty of work; and, like one of his companions, the cart-horse, he will drudge on till the day of his death.

So in the North of England, where they give him a cottage and his food, and keep no more of his species than will just do the work, letting all the rest march off to the Tyne collieries; he is a very patient creature; and if they did not show him books, would not wince at all. So in the fens of Lincolnshire, Cambridgeshire, and Huntingdon, and on many a fat and clayey level of England, where there are no resident gentry, and but here and there a farm-house, you may meet the English peasant in his most sluggish and benumbed condition. He is then a long-legged, staring creature, considerably "lower than the angels," who, if you ask him a question, gapes like an Indian frog, which, when its mouth is open, has its head half off; and neither understands your language, nor, if he did, could grasp your ideas. He is there a walking lump, a thing with members, but very little membership with the intellectual world; but with a soul as stagnant as one of his own dykes. All that has been wanted in him has been cultivated, and is there—good sturdy limbs, to plough and sow, reap and mow, and feed bullocks; and even in those operations, his sinews have been half-superseded by machinery. There never was any need of his mind; and, therefore, it never has been minded.

This is the English peasant, where there is nobody to breathe a soul into the clod. But what is he where there are thousands of the wealthy and the wise? What is he round London—the great, the noble, and the enlightened? Pretty much the same, and from pretty much the same causes. Few trouble themselves about him. He feels that he is a mere serf, amongst the great and free; a mere machine in the hands of the mighty, who use him as such. He sees the sunshine of grandeur, but he does not feel its warmth. He hears that the great folks are wise; but all he knows is, that their wisdom does not trouble itself about his ignorance. He asks, with “The Farmer’s Boy,”

Whence comes this change, ungracious, irksome, cold?
 Whence this new grandeur that mine eyes behold?—
 The widening distance that I daily see?
 Has wealth done this? Then wealth’s a foe to me!—
 Foe to my rights, that leaves a powerful few
 The paths of emulation to pursue.

Beneath the overwhelming sense of his position, that he belongs to a neglected, despised caste, he is, in the locality alluded to, truly a dull fellow. That the peasant there is not an ass or a sheep, you only know by his standing an end. You hear no strains of country drollery, and no characters of curious or eccentric humour; all is dull, plodding, and lumpish.

But go forth, my masters, to a greater distance from the luminous capital of England; get away into the Midland and more Northern Counties, where the pride of greatness is not so palpably before the poor man’s eyes—where the peasantry and villagers are numerous enough to keep one another in countenance; and there you shall find the English peasant a “happier and a wiser man.” Sunday-schools, and village day-schools, give him at least the ability to read the Bible. There, the peasant feels that he is a man; he speaks in a broad dialect, indeed,

but he is "a fellow of infinite jest." Hear him in the hay-field, in the corn-field, at the harvest-supper, or by the village ale-house fire, if he be not very refined, he is, nevertheless, a very independent fellow. Look at the man indeed! None of your long, lanky fellows, with a sleepy visage; but a sturdy, square-built chap, propped on a pair of legs, that have self-will, and the spirit of Hampden in them, as plain as the ribs of the grey-worsted stockings that cover them. What thews, what sinews, what a pair of *calves*! why, they more resemble a couple of full-grown *bulls*! See to his salutation, as he passes any of his neighbours—hear it. Does he touch his hat, and bow his head, and look down, as the great man goes by in his carriage? No! he leaves that to the cowed bumpkin of the south. He looks his rich neighbour full in the face, with a fearless, but respectful gaze, and bolts from his manly breast a hearty "Good day to ye, sir!" To his other neighbour, his equal in worldly matters, he extends his broad hand, and gives him a shake that is felt to the bottom of the heart. "Well, and how are you, John?—and how's Molly, and all the little ankle-biters?—and how goes the pig on, and the garden—eh?"

Let me hear the dialogue of those two brave fellows; there is the soul of England's brightest days in it. I am sick of slavish poverty on the one hand, and callous pride on the other. I yearn for the sound of language breathed from the lungs of humble independence, and the cordial, earnest greetings of poor, but warm-hearted men, as I long for the breeze of the mountains and the sea. Oh! I doubt much if this

Bold peasantry, a country's pride,

is lowered in its tone, both of heart-wholeness, boldness, and affection, by the harsh times and harsh measures that have passed over every district, even the most favoured; or why

all these emigrations, and why all these parish-unions? What, then, is not the English peasant what he was? If I went amongst them where I used to go, should I not find the same merry groups seated amongst the sheaves, or under the hedgerows, full of laughter, and full of droll anecdotes of all the country round? Should I not hear of the farmer who never wrote but one letter in his life, and that was to a gentleman forty miles off; who, on opening it, and not being able to puzzle out more than the name and address of his correspondent, mounted his horse in his vexation, and rode all the way to ask the farmer to read the letter himself; and he could not do it—could not read his own writing? Should I not hear Jonathan Moore, the stout old mower, rallied on his address to the bull, when it pursued him till he escaped into a tree? How Jonathan, sitting across a branch, looked down with the utmost contempt on the bull, and endeavoured to convince him that he was a bully and a coward? “My! what a vapouring coward art thou! Where’s the fairness, where’s the equalness of the match? I tell thee, my heart’s good enough; but what’s my strength to thine?”

Should I not once more hear the hundred-times-told story of Jockey Dawes, and the man who sold him his horse? Should I not hear these, and scores of such anecdotes, that show the simple life of the district, and yet have more hearty merriment in them than much finer stories in much finer places? Hard times and hard measures may have quenched some of the ancient hilarity of the English peasant, and struck a silence into lungs that were wont to “crow like chanticleer;” yet I will not believe but that, in many a sweet and picturesque district, on many a brown moorland, in many a far-off glen and dale of our wilder

and more primitive districts, where the peasantry are almost the sole inhabitants—whether shepherds, labourers, hewers of wood, or drawers of water—

The ancient spirit is not dead;

that homely and loving groups gather round evening fires, beneath low and smoky rafters, and feel that they have labour and care enough, as their fathers had, but that they have the pride of homes, hearts, and sympathies still.

Let England take care that these are the portion of the English peasant, and he will never cease to show himself the noblest peasant on the face of the earth. Is he not that, in his patience with penury with him, and old age and the union before him? Is he not that, when his landlord has given him his sympathy? When he has given him an ALLOTMENT—who so grateful, so industrious, so provident, so contented, and so respectable?

The English peasant has in his nature all the elements of the English character. Give him ease, and who so readily pleased; wrong him, and who so desperate in his rage?

In his younger days, before the care of a family weighs on him, he is a clumsy, but a very light-hearted creature. To see a number of young country fellows get into play together, always reminds one of a quantity of heavy cart-horses turned into a field on a Sunday. They gallop, and kick, and scream. There is no malice, but a dreadful jeopardy of bruises and broken ribs. Their play is truly called horse-play; it is all slaps and bangs, tripping-up, tumbles, and laughter. But to see the young peasant in his glory, you should see him hastening to the Michaelmas-fair, statute, bull-roasting, or mop. He has served his year; he has money in his pocket, his sweetheart on his arm, or he is sure to meet her at the fair. Whether he

goes again to his old place or a new one, he will have a week's holiday. Thus, on old Michaelmas-day, he and all his fellows, all the country over, are let loose, and are on the way to the fair. The houses are empty of them—the highways are full of them; there they go, lads and lasses, streaming along, all in their finery, and with a world of laughter and loud talk. See, here they come, flocking into the market-town! And there, what preparations for them!—shows, strolling theatres, stalls of all kinds—bearing clothes of all kinds, knives, combs, queen-cakes, and gingerbread, and a hundred inventions to lure those hard-earned wages out of his fob. And he does not mean to be stingy to-day; he will treat his lass, and buy her a new gown into the bargain. See, how they go rolling on together! He holds up his elbow sharply by his side; she thrusts her arm through his, *up to the elbow*, and away they go—a walking miracle that they can walk together at all. As to keeping step, that is out of the question; but, besides this, they wag and roll about in such a way, that, keeping their arms tightly linked, it is amazing that they don't pull off one or the other; but they don't. They shall see the shows, and stand all in a crowd before them, with open eyes and open mouths, wondering at the beauty of the dancing-women, and their gowns all over spangles, and at all the wit and grimaces, and somersets of harlequin and clown. They have had a merry dinner and a dance, like a dance of elephants and hippopotami; and then—

To-morrow to fresh fields and pastures new.

And these are the men that become sullen and desperate—that become poachers and incendiaries. How and why? It is not plenty and kind words that make them so? What, then? What makes the wolves herd together, and descend from the Alps and the Pyrenees? What

makes them desperate and voracious, blind with fury, and revelling with vengeance? Hunger and hardship!

When the English peasant is gay, at ease, well fed and clothed, what cares he how many pheasants are in a wood, or ricks in a farmer's yard? When he has a dozen backs to clothe, and a dozen mouths to feed, and nothing to put on the one, and little to put into the other—then that which seemed a mere playful puppy, suddenly starts up a snarling, red-eyed monster! How sullen he grows! With what equal indifference he shoots down pheasants or gamekeepers. How the man who so recently held up his head and laughed aloud, now sneaks, a villanous fiend, with the dark lantern and the match, to his neighbour's rick! Monster! Can this be the English peasant? 'Tis the same!—'tis the very man! But what has made him so? What has thus demonized, thus infuriated, thus converted him into a walking pestilence? Villain as he is, is he alone to blame?—or is there another?



DECEMBER.

WE have travelled with the year from month to month, and the year has travelled with us. It has brought us to December and to winter. We have but one short month left to complete our year, and our calendar of it. Frost, the harbinger of whole months of settled cold, has given us already a visit, and cut down our dahlias, and bade us look to any tender plants that are out of doors, and to ourselves. The aurora-borealis has flashed forth in our nocturnal sky—a sure sign of what is coming. Once more, therefore, we may look for frosts and snows, and the sharp salute of the east wind. Well for those who can wrap in warm cloaks, and coats, and furs, when they

issue forth; and for whom the fire blazes, and the table is well spread, at home. How many will miss these things in the coming winter! We look at the coming severity, and with a sigh leave the huge burden of suffering to Providence, as too heavy for our mortal strength.

And yet we must lend each a hand towards lightening the distress that will certainly prevail. We must brace up our hearts to forget our own troubles, in the imperative calls of the calamities of others. We must rouse all the slumbering humanity in our nature, and bring forth from our chests and wardrobes all the coats, and cloaks, and blankets, that possibly can be spared. How much better will they be on backs and beds of our suffering, ill-employed fellow-creatures in the coming winter, than on senseless pegs and shelves, or piled in corners that have no feeling. "Providence tempers the wind to the shorn lamb," says Sterne; and the sentiment is so beautiful, that thousands have come firmly to believe that it is Scripture; but the shorn lambs of the human race often feel the fury of the elements, unabated by anything but the screens and defences raised by the sympathies of their fellows. Providence will have the rich to be the shepherds of the poor, or why has he given them more than they need. Let us remember—

In rich men's halls the fire is piled,
 And ermine robes keep out the weather;
 In poor men's huts the fire is low,
 Through broken panes the keen winds blow,
 And old and young are cold together.

Oh poverty is disconsolate—
 Its pains are many—its foes are strong.
 The rich man, in his jovial cheer,
 Wishes 't were winter through the year;
 The poor man, 'mid his wants profound,
 With all his little children round,
 Prays God that winter be not long.

MARY HOWITT.

Let us do all we can to cheer the winter fireside of the poor, and then let them battle with the elements abroad. They may manfully endure.

COLD ABROAD FOR WARMTH AT HOME.

What an amount of endurance, in fact, there is in the world of one of these conditions, for the enjoyment of the other. For this the traveller drives over the bleak heath, with frost in his veins, and the hissing east-wind in his teeth; and cheers himself on with the imagination of the blazing fire, the warm supper, his pipe and his glass at the well-known inn—his home for the time. For this the shepherd treads the crunching snows, and beats his fingers on his sides on wintry downs; for this the labourer spends his eight or ten hours over his monotonous task in wood and field—the sailor mounts the topmast, while the icy rain glazes the ropes as he ascends, and glues his aching hands to them; and he sits out his turn amid the midnight, and the roar of darksome seas. For this fifty thousand wretches, in the streets of London, suffer cold, and hunger, and contempt; *their* homes being the purchased threepenny lodgings, where they warm themselves by huddling together in heaps, like sheep in a wintry pen. For this thousands of shivering children stand or trudge on through daily miseries, the impotent and passive ministers of their elders. It is theirs “to stand and wait”—to hold hammers, hand nails, watch gates, guard open shops, sit in deathly lobbies expecting answers to messages, doing anything, or, what is worse, doing nothing, at the bidding of better clothed, fed, and warmed individuals. For this they offer flowers which nobody wants, pencils which nobody has faith in, and lucifers which nobody notices; and freeze against great bare walls, and

at wind-whistling corners, half into statues, and half into crouching miseries! Yet for them there is some dismal nook of some dismal place, where a bag of shavings, or a heap of matting, presents a paradise of comparative warmth through a few dark hours, if they can only carry thither the sum which opens the inexorable doors.

Immense is the amount of daily wretchedness throughout the world in winter, that is cheerfully endured for the warmth at home. In England, the abundance of coal renders unnecessary the prowling and hacking, in forest and on waste, for fuel, which is so common to the poor in most other countries. Here the fire, like the bread, must be sternly worked for; but in most other countries, the forest supplies the necessary fuel, and the poor must out and gather it. We may see a little of this in those parts of our own country where coal is scarce, and commons are not wholly despoiled of their trees; but abroad, the supply of the fuel is generally the work of the women and children. Woods, except far from towns and villages, are no solitudes. At all hours of the day, and all seasons, you find in them the peasant women and children, raking up the fallen leaves for the bedding of their cattle, and gathering sticks and dead wood for their fires.

Down every path of the wintry mountains you see them descending, scratching the snow with the long bundles they trail after them. They are trudging home full of glee, dreaming invariably of the warm room and the warm stove. The father will be come in from the barn and the byre. The evening meal will be set out, and the talk of the day's doings had over it. And then the mother will bring forward her spinning-wheel, and the father will take from the shelf the "Book of Wonders," and the children will place their stools behind the stove, and listen with all their ears. That is the hour of the peasant's felicity; that is

the warmth and the paradise that have made all the long days cold, and the wading through the snows in the hills, and the dreary chill of the wood, tolerable.

Then are all the simple souls entranced, and rapt away into a land of loveliest enchantment and romance. The good old times of simplest faith and chivalrous adventure have come down to the peasantry of the continent in a literature of their own, to which they cling with an unconquerable affection, and which is to them ever new. In France, Germany, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, and other countries of Northern Europe, the peasant's hut is enriched from the bookstall of the fair, with its own peculiar library of poetry and tale. There are the "History of Griseldis, and the Mark-Graf Walther," the "Patient Grizel" of Boccaccio and Chaucer; the "Holy Genoveva;" "The Emperor Octavianus;" "Fortunatus with his Cap;" "The Horned Siegfried;" "Tristan and Isalde;" "The Beautiful Melusina, a Sea Wonder, and the Daughter of King Helmis;" "The Fair Magelona;" "The Four Heymon's Children;" "Roland's Three Pages;" "Snow-White;" and a score of others. Round thousands of winter-stoves, the assembled families of the peasantry, and often with the addition of in-dropping neighbours, sit and spin, and listen to the reading of "The Four Heymon's Children" riding forth on the good horse Bayard; of the trials of Genoveva, or Griseldis; how Octavianus avenged himself of the traitor who brought so much trouble on his empress and his children; or how Peter with the silver keys, after all his wanderings and adventures, won his beautiful and good Magelona, and lived long with her as the noble Count of Provence. In Denmark and Sweden, they read wonderful pages of Thor and Loke, and "The Beautiful Castle East of the Sun, and North of the Earth;" of "The Land of Youth;" or they bewitch themselves with

Ingeman's "Holger the Dane," which they are never weary of reading.

In Germany, they also devour the horrors of "The Three Miller's Daughters"—a dreadful Bluebeard story; the wild tale of "The Inestimable Lock in the African Cave Xaxa;" or they laugh at the simplicity of the Schilburgers, or mingle a little modern marvel with the old—the Cruelties of the Turks towards the Greeks, or the Wars of Bonaparte.

Such are the hours of domestic warmth and intellectual enjoyment with which a good Providence recompenses the simple dwellers of foreign woods and wilds for the out-door cold and cares of the day. The wolf may howl amid the winds at the door; the dark forest may frown around; snows may bury the valleys, and the icy blasts sweep the wastes; but within there is light and comfort, and a world of wonder in which the imagination roams as on the sun-bright plains of heaven. Where poverty presses hardly, come letters, too, from lands beyond the Atlantic, where their kindred have established themselves in new homes, and invite them to plenty and independence.

It is in our own wealthy country, and especially in our most wealthy cities, and above all in our metropolis, that those who suffer the fiercest pangs of cold abroad, enjoy the least of the warmth at home. The wretched street-haunter of London, where is his or her home? The gin-palace alone invites them in to a warmth that scorches, and a blaze that kills. The dreary lodging-house admits them only to scenes of the most revolting filth, discomfort, and depravity. In these, human creatures herd together in the rudeness of beasts and the infamy of devils. No songs of the olden time; no romance of beauty and grace, of tenderness and exalted love, breaks through the dark-

ness of their spirits, and soothes them into virtue. Degradation the most hideous, vulgarity the most revolting, theft and cunning, murder and brutal violence, crowd and crouch together, and dream only of more successful lies, more adroit robberies, more subtle infamies for the morrow.

Such is the grand triumph of our civilisation, such the result of our wealth, such the blessing of our Christianity! Who would not prefer to this the peasant's fate?—cold abroad, but warmth at home—the blazing fire, the assembled family, and the book that has in its pages worlds of fresh beauty and the soul of Paradise?

But we will dwell no longer on this melancholy subject. Even here, we will trust, from recent inquiries and disclosures, the dawn of a better state of things has broke. Let us look without, then; and there, to the young, and strong, and healthy, how beautiful and cheering is winter! The clear, sharp, bright days, how they brace the nerves! how they make the blood bound! What a feeling of pleasure lives through the heart and the whole being! The splendid heavens at night—the moon how splendid! The snows in their abundance, the hoar-frost in its silent magnificence, the ice-bound river with its throngs of sliders and skaters! Walking well clad in winter is often a luxury. In the country, the farmer, with his corn all in, his cattle in their sheds and at their cribs, calls his friends about him, and where such jolly dinners, or who so jolly? The sound of the flail is his music, and the talk of markets his felicity. And yet he has employment enough to prevent total stagnation. He has his manure carted out; sees that his sheep are well tended in their sheltered pastures, and all the collected family of the farm-yard—horses, cows, pigs, poultry—properly cared for. There is a busy cutting of hay, chopping of straw, pulling,

bringing home, and slicing turnips for them: and then, if he be a sportsman, he takes his gun, and pursues the hare, the wild-fowl along the winding stream-banks, or the field-fares that come in flocks from the north.

REMARKABLE DREAMS, WARNINGS, AND PROVIDENCES.

In these gloomy days and long evenings of December, there is no more joyous mode of passing the hours, than drawing round the blazing fire and reading or telling stories. We draw, then, our chair, fling fresh fagots on the ample grate, and begin. Our fathers and mothers were wise in their generation, and gave the imagination its food as well as the stomach; made the old roof-tree ring with laughter when days were dreary, and created a sunshine on the hearth when there was none abroad. For them, storms only howled in envy at their internal enjoyment; winds only filled the sails of their pleasure; hail and rain only pattered on the panes, like comfits flung about in the carnival of home. Ghosts skulked about their old galleries, and frightened them at night; but they took their revenge, and made them furnish a charming shiver at the assembled fireside. No ghost ever ventured to show himself there; no, nor blue devils, nor creature uncouth, except it were Robin Goodfellow, whose

Ho, ho, ho!

might seem to mingle in the general laughter of light hearts, which never fell with the stocks, nor broke with banks or the failure of railroad schemes. But our ancestors, who gave to the English fireside its charm, that will endure with the race, were not always laughing; they were frequently "merry and wise," in their talk by the glowing ingle; and on this occasion we mean to imitate them. Therefore, we now cry attention! and open our budget of remarkable dreams, warnings, and providences.

THE OLD WELL IN LANGUEDOC.

The proof of the truth of the following statement, taken from the *Courrier de l'Europe*, rests not only upon the known veracity of the narrator, but upon the fact that the whole occurrence is registered in the judicial records of the criminal trials of the province of Languedoc. We give it as we heard it from the lips of the dreamer, as nearly as possible in his own words.

As the junior partner in a commercial house at Lyons, I had been travelling some time on the business of the firm, when, one evening in the month of June, I arrived at a town in Languedoc, where I had never before been. I put up at a quiet inn in the suburbs, and, being very much fatigued, ordered dinner at once; and went to bed almost immediately after, determined to begin very early in the morning my visits to the different merchants.

I was no sooner in bed than I fell into a deep sleep, and had a dream that made the strongest impression upon me.

I thought that I had arrived at the same town, but in the middle of the day, instead of the evening, as was really the case; that I had stopped at the very same inn, and gone out immediately, as an unoccupied stranger would do, to see whatever was worthy of observation in the place. I walked down the main street, into another street, crossing it at right angles, and apparently leading into the country. I had not gone very far, when I came to a church, the Gothic portico of which I stopped to examine. When I had satisfied my curiosity, I advanced to a by-path which branched off from the main street. Obeying an impulse which I could neither account for nor control, I struck into the path, though it was winding, rugged, and unfrequented, and presently reached a miserable cot-

tage, in front of which was a garden covered with weeds. I had no difficulty in getting into the garden, for the hedge had several gaps in it, wide enough to admit four carts abreast. I approached an old well, which stood solitary and gloomy in a distant corner; and looking down into it, I beheld distinctly, without any possibility of mistake, a corpse which had been stabbed in several places. I counted the deep wounds and the wide gashes whence the blood was flowing.

I would have cried out, but my tongue clove to the roof of my mouth. At this moment I awoke, with my hair on end, trembling in every limb, and cold drops of perspiration bedewing my forehead—awoke to find myself comfortably in bed, my trunk standing beside me, birds warbling cheerfully around my window; while a young, clear voice was singing a provincial air in the next room, and the morning sun was shining brightly through the curtains.

I sprung from my bed, dressed myself, and, as it was yet very early, I thought I would seek an appetite for breakfast by a morning stroll. I accordingly entered the main street, and went along. The farther I walked, the stranger became the confused recollection of the objects that presented themselves to my view. "It is very strange," I thought; "I have never been here before; and I could swear that I have seen this house, and the next, and that other on the left." On I went, till I came to the corner of a street, crossing the one down which I had come. For the first time, I remembered my dream, but put away the thought as too absurd; still, at every step, some fresh point of resemblance struck me. "Am I still dreaming!" I exclaimed, not without a momentary thrill through my whole frame. "Is the agreement to be perfect to the very end?" Before long, I reached the church, with the

same architectural features that had attracted my notice in the dream; and then the high-road, along which I pursued my way, coming at length to the same by-path that had presented itself to my imagination a few hours before. There was no possibility of doubt or mistake. Every tree, every turn, was familiar to me. I was not at all of a superstitious turn, and was wholly engrossed in the practical details of commercial business. My mind had never dwelt upon the hallucinations, the presentiments, that science either denies, or is unable to explain; but I must confess, that I now felt myself spell-bound, as by some enchantment; and, with Pascal's words on my lips, "A continued dream would be equal to reality," I hurried forward, no longer doubting that the next moment would bring me to the cottage; and this really was the case. In all its outward circumstances, it corresponded to what I had seen in my dream. Who, then, could wonder that I determined to ascertain whether the coincidence would hold good in every other point? I entered the garden, and went direct to the spot on which I had seen the well; but here the resemblance failed—well, there was none. I looked in every direction; examined the whole garden, went round the cottage, which appeared to be inhabited, although no person was visible; but nowhere could I find any vestige of a well.

I made no attempt to enter the cottage, but hastened back to the hotel, in a state of agitation difficult to describe. I could not make up my mind to pass unnoticed such extraordinary coincidences; but how was any clue to be obtained to the terrible mystery?

I went to the landlord, and after chatting with him for some time on different subjects, I came to the point, and asked him directly to whom the cottage belonged that was on a by-road which I described to him.

“I wonder, sir,” said he, “what made you take such particular notice of such a wretched little hovel. It is inhabited by an old man with his wife, who have the character of being very morose and unsociable. They rarely leave the house—see nobody, and nobody goes to see them; but they are quiet enough, and I never heard anything against them beyond this. Of late, their very existence seems to have been forgotten; and I believe, sir, that you are the first who, for years, has turned his steps to the deserted spot.”

These details, far from satisfying my curiosity, did but provoke it the more. Breakfast was served, but I could not touch it; and I felt that if I presented myself to the merchants in such a state of excitement, they would think me mad; and, indeed, I felt very much excited. I paced up and down the room, looked out at the window, trying to fix my attention on some external object, but in vain. I endeavoured to interest myself in a quarrel between two men in the street; but the garden and the cottage pre-occupied my mind; and at last, snatching my hat, I cried, “I will go, come what may.”

I repaired to the nearest magistrate, told him the object of my visit, and related the whole circumstance briefly and clearly. I saw directly that he was much impressed by my statement.

“It is, indeed, very strange,” said he; “and after what has happened, I do not think I am at liberty to leave the matter without further inquiry. Important business will prevent my accompanying you in a search, but I will place two of the police at your command. Go once more to the hovel, see its inhabitants, and search every part of it. You may, perhaps, make some important discovery.”

I suffered but a very few moments to elapse before I was

on my way, accompanied by the two officers, and we soon reached the cottage. We knocked, and after waiting for some time, an old man opened the door. He received us somewhat uncivilly, but showed no mark of suspicion, nor, indeed, of any other emotion, when we told him we wished to search the house.

“Very well, gentlemen; as fast, and as soon as you please,” he replied.

“Have you a well here?” I inquired.

“No, sir; we are obliged to go for water to a spring at a considerable distance.”

We searched the house, which I did, I confess, with a kind of feverish excitement, expecting every moment to bring some fatal secret to light. Meantime, the man gazed upon us with an impenetrable vacancy of look, and we at last left the cottage without seeing anything that could confirm my suspicions. I resolved to inspect the garden once more; and a number of idlers having been by this time collected, drawn to the spot by the sight of a stranger with two armed men engaged in searching the premises, I made inquiries of some of them whether they knew anything about a well in that place. I could get no information at first, but at length an old woman came slowly forward, leaning on a crutch.

“A well!” cried she—“is it the well you are looking after? That has been gone these thirty years. I remember, as if it were only yesterday, many a time, when I was a young girl, how I used to amuse myself by throwing stones into it, and hearing the splash they used to make in the water.”

“And could you tell where that well used to be?” I asked, almost breathless with excitement.

“As near as I can remember, on the very spot on which your honour is standing,” said the old woman.

“I could have sworn it!” thought I, springing from the place as if I had trod upon a scorpion.

Need I say, that we set to work to dig up the ground. At about eighteen inches deep, we came to a layer of bricks, which, being broken up, gave to view some boards, which were easily removed; after which we beheld the mouth of the well.

“I was quite sure it was here,” said the woman. “What a fool the old fellow was to stop it up, and then have so far to go for water!”

A sounding-line, furnished with hooks, was let down into the well; the crowd pressing around us, and breathlessly bending over the dark and fœtid hole, the secrets of which seemed hidden in impenetrable obscurity. This was repeated several times without any result. At length, penetrating below the mud, the hooks caught an old chest, upon the top of which had been thrown a great many large stones; and after much effort and time, we succeeded in raising it to daylight. The sides and lid were decayed and rotten; it needed no locksmith to open it; and we found within, what I was certain we should find, and which paralysed with horror all the spectators, who had not my pre-convictions—we found the remains of a human body.

The police-officers who had accompanied me now rushed into the house, and secured the person of the old man. As to his wife, no one could at first tell what had become of her. After some search, however, she was found hidden behind a bundle of fagots.

By this time, nearly the whole town had gathered around the spot; and now that this horrible fact had come to light, everybody had some crime to tell, which had been laid to the charge of the old couple. The people who predict after an event, are numerous.

The old couple were brought before the proper authori-

ties, and privately and separately examined. The old man persisted in his denial, most pertinaciously; but his wife at length confessed, that, in concert with her husband, she had once—a very long time ago—murdered a pedlar, whom they had met one night on the high-road, and who had been incautious enough to tell them of a considerable sum of money which he had about him, and whom, in consequence, they induced to pass the night at their house. They had taken advantage of the heavy sleep induced by fatigue, to strangle him; his body had been put into the chest, the chest thrown into the well, and the well stopped up.

The pedlar being from another country, his disappearance had occasioned no inquiry; there was no witness of the crime; and as its traces had been carefully concealed from every eye, the two criminals had good reason to believe themselves secure from detection. They had not, however, been able to silence the voice of conscience; they fled from the sight of their fellow-men; they trembled at the slightest noise, and silence thrilled them with terror. They had often formed a determination to leave the scene of their crime—to fly to some distant land; but still some undefinable fascination kept them near the remains of their victim.

Terrified by the deposition of his wife, and unable to resist the overwhelming proofs against him, the man at length made a similar confession; and six weeks after, the unhappy criminals died on the scaffold, in accordance with the sentence of the Parliament of Toulouse. They died penitent.

The well was once more shut up, and the cottage levelled to the ground. It was not, however, until fifty years had in some measure deadened the memory of the terrible transaction, that the ground was cultivated. It is now a fine field of corn.

Such was the dream and its result.

I never had the courage to revisit the town where I had been an actor in such a tragedy. The story was told again by me last winter, in a company where it gave rise to a long and animated discussion upon the credibility to be attached to dreams. Ancient and modern history was ransacked, to find arguments on both sides. Plutarch was quoted, in what he says of a certain Lysimachus, grandson of Aristides, who embraced the profession of an interpreter of dreams, and realised wealth by the trade. Cicero states, that a dream of Cecilia, daughter of Barbaricus, appeared of sufficient importance to be the subject of a decree of the senate. One of the most indefatigable commentators of the sixteenth century, Cœlius Rhodizinus, when labouring to correct the text of Pliny, which he has singularly obscured, was stopped by the word *ectrapelis*. In vain did he work at the meaning for a whole week—he ended by falling asleep; and in a dream, the solution of the difficulty came into his head. It was during sleep that Henricus ab Heeres, a Dutch writer, very celebrated in his day, but very obscure in ours, composed all his works; once awake, he had but to transcribe from memory.

Two rather rare works, published in 1690, and 1706, had for subject the dreams of Louis XIV.

SMALLER INSTANCES OF REALIZED DREAMS AND WARNINGS.

A CHILD SAVED FROM DEATH BY FIRE.

The following occurrence is well known in Edinburgh. A gentleman residing some miles from that city, had occasion to pass the night there. In the middle of the night, he dreamed that his house was on fire, and that one of his children was in the midst of the flames. He awoke; and so strong was the impression on his mind, that he instantly got out of his bed, saddled his horse, and galloped home. In

accordance with his dream, he found his house in flames; and thus arriving, saved his little girl, about ten months old, who had been forgotten in a room which the flames had just reached.

CHILD SAVED FROM BURIAL ALIVE.

The work of a physician, recently published, states this fact. A mother, who was uneasy about the health of a child who was out at nurse, dreamed that it had been buried alive. The horrid thought awoke her; and she determined to set off for the place without a moment's delay. On her arrival, she learned, that after a short and sudden illness, the child had died, and had just then been buried. Half frantic from this intelligence, she insisted on the grave being opened, and the moment when the coffin-lid was raised she carried off the child in her arms. He still breathed, and maternal care restored him to life. The truth of this anecdote has been warranted. Our informant has seen the child so wonderfully rescued. He is now a man in the prime of life, and filling an important post.

THE JESUIT MALVENDA.

This man, the author of a "Commentary on the Bible," saw one night, in his sleep, a man laying his hand upon his chest, who announced to him that he would soon die. He was then in perfect health; but soon after, being seized by a pulmonary disorder, was carried off. This is told by the sceptic, Bayle, who relates it as a fact too well authenticated, even for the apostle of Phyrhonism to doubt.

SIR HUMPHRY DAVY.

Sir Humphry dreamed one night that he was in Italy, where he had fallen ill. The room in which he seemed to lie struck him in a very peculiar manner, and he particularly noticed all the details of the furniture, etc., remarking, in his dream, how unlike anything English

they were. In his dream, he appeared to be carefully nursed by a young girl, whose fair and delicate features were imprinted upon his memory. After some years, Davy travelled in Italy; and being taken ill there, actually found himself in the very room of which he had dreamed, attended upon by the very same young woman whose features had made so deep an impression upon his mind. The reader need not be reminded of the statement resting upon such authority, eminent alike for truth that would not deceive, and intelligence that could not be deceived.

THE NEEDLEWOMAN'S DREAM.

In the year 1836, the author then residing at Esher, in Surrey, a young needlewoman was engaged from town to do work in the house. This young woman, already a widow, a Mrs. Scott, was a very neat and intelligent person. On arriving near the house, she exclaimed, "How strange! how very strange! I know this place perfectly well, though I never was here in my life. I once saw it in a dream; and I am sorry to say, I dreamed that I was here some weeks, and suffered from some severe and frightful accident." On entering the house, she again made the same remarks, declaring that she knew every room in it, and described them exactly as they were, before she went into any of them. On seeing the author, she was still more astonished, observing that she had seen him precisely in her dream, and should have recognised him anywhere. This young woman actually worked for several weeks in the house. Her dream was frequently adverted to, and laughed at, as nothing whatever occurred. Her labour was done; she went away; and the dream was pronounced a singular, but still a mere dream. Very soon after her departure, it was found that an alteration in some curtains was desirable; she was written to, and requested to come down again and make this alteration. On

the day fixed, a gig was sent to meet her at a point where she had occasion to stop by the way; and on coming within sight of the author's house, the horse, taking fright at something, ran the gig against a wooden fence, upset it, and flinging Mrs. Scott to a distance, completely verified her dream, by bruising her frightfully and breaking the smaller bone of one of her legs. From the effects of this accident she was, as foreseen in her dream, laid up six weeks, and suffered immensely for a long time afterwards.

The following singular narratives have been all verbally related to us by a beloved octogenarian relative, and, as will be seen, have reference principally to the Society of Friends, amongst whose "older worthies" a belief of this kind was by no means uncommon, whatever it may be at present:—

THE MISSION OF OLD THOMAS WARING TO THE TOWN OF ROSS.

A number of gentlemen, about fifty years ago, were sitting in the travellers' room of the principal inn of the old town of Leominster, and by chance there happened to be amongst them almost every variety of religious denomination. This led to a conversation, in which an old clergyman of the Church of England made the extraordinary assertion, that there was more true religion in the little finger of old Thomas Waring, the Quaker-staymaker of that town, than in all the dean and chapter of Hereford, with the bishop included; "though I say it," continued the clergyman, "who am myself a prebend of that cathedral."

My husband, who was one of the company, expressed his astonishment at this assertion; but the old clergyman proceeded, by facts, to justify it; and, amongst other facts brought forward to illustrate the simple, but profound piety of his character, he related the following:—

"Old Thomas Waring, the staymaker, sat one evening

in his shop among his workpeople, when it became strongly impressed upon his mind that he must set off directly to the town of Ross. It was winter time; the days were short, and the weather none of the best. The idea seemed so strange a one, that he did his best to get rid of it. He argued with himself for some time; it seemed very absurd and wild, but he could not free his mind of what appeared to be his duty. It was impressed upon him like a mission; and as he was of those pure, simple, and obedient spirits, that once knowing the will of God, implicitly obey it, he rose up from the seat where he sat at work, and giving orders that his horse should be immediately saddled, set out. It was then four in the afternoon, and it was thirty miles to the town of Ross. He stopped at Hereford, which is about mid-distance, to bait his horse; and in order that he might lose no time, he fed it with oatmeal mash, and immediately resumed his journey.

It was late in the night when he approached Ross, and still his business there remained unknown to him. In passing over the Wye, however, as he entered the town, he cast his eyes upwards, and saw, in the darkness of the night, and amid the tall, dark houses, a light in an attic window; and immediately it was revealed to him, that there lay his mission, and that on going there all would be made plain.

He lost not a moment, but riding directly up to the door, knocked violently. No one came; and, while waiting, he gave his horse in charge to a boy in the street, bidding him take it to a brother Quaker's, one George Dew's, and say that the owner of the horse would sleep at his house that night. Any one but a simple man, full of faith, as old Thomas Waring was, would have feared lest the boy should ride off with the horse; but the old man was a discerner of spirits, and the boy conveyed both the horse and the message faithfully.

After waiting long at the door of the house, a young woman opened it, and timidly asked what he pleased to want. He told her, in all simplicity, that he did not know, but that if she would listen for a few moments to what he had to say, perhaps she herself might explain it. She invited him in; and he then related to her the case exactly as we have given it, remarking, in conclusion, "And having told thee this, I can only repeat that I know not for what I am come." The young woman was much affected, and wept bitterly.

"Sir," said she, "I can tell you for what you are come; it is to save me. I was gone into that upper room, with the firm intention of putting an end to my life, which has become very miserable. Nothing would have prevented me committing suicide, had you not come. God has sent you! I am not altogether forsaken or abandoned by Him."

"Thou art not," said the good man, himself deeply affected; and from that he went on to pour hope and consolation into her afflicted spirit. The visit of Thomas Waring to Ross was indeed not purposeless.

THE FOREWARNING DREAM OF AN AMERICAN LADY.

An American female preacher amongst the Friends was in Cornwall, when I was young, on what is called a religious visit to Friends there. She was returning from Helston, where she had been holding a meeting, to Penryn; and several Friends were in company, in gigs and other carriages. On arriving at a considerable descent in the road, a large, heavily-laden carrier's wagon was seen at a considerable distance, slowly advancing towards the foot of the hill. At this moment she earnestly desired the Friend who was driving her to stop, and also to desire the whole party to do the same, until the advancing wagon had

ascended the hill on which they were. The request seemed singular, and she was asked why they should do that. In reply she told them, that before leaving her own country, she had a dream, in which she had seen this very spot, with the descending hill, the piece of water to the right, the narrow road at the bottom, and the advancing wagon, which, in her dream, had been overturned at that very place, causing the death of many people. Thus forewarned, by obeying the intimation, she believed they would escape this very danger.

As the fact was curious, and the lady of influence amongst them, the Friends complied with her desire. A halt was made, and all eyes were fixed on the wagon. At the foot of the hill the road was narrow, and there was a considerable piece of water on their right hand, at the very place where, had they driven forward, they would have met the wagon. Arrived at this point of the road, to their infinite surprise, and without any apparent cause, the wagon was overturned, and falling upon that side of the road where they would have been, entirely blocked it up.

The above was related to me by one of the party who was present.

SPIRITUAL IMPRESSIONS OF QUAKER PREACHERS.

It is related of Thomas Scattergood, a celebrated preacher amongst the Quakers, and an American, that one Sunday, at Bristol, at the close of the morning service, he rose and said, that it was deeply impressed upon his mind to request that no one then present would absent himself from the afternoon meeting. He could not tell, he said, for what purpose he was required to make this request; but that it seemed urgent, of solemn moment, and he was not at liberty to omit it. The afternoon gathering was attended by all who had heard his earnest and mysterious request,

except three young men, who had made a previous engagement to join a pleasure-party on the water. In this excursion, and during the afternoon meeting of the Friends, the boat in which this party set out, was upset, and all lives lost.

Very similar to this, was what occurred to Martha Routh, a well-known preacher of the last generation, amongst the Friends at Manchester. She also stated, before the dispersing of the Sunday-morning meeting, that her mind had been deeply impressed with the sense of some person, who was absent from religious worship, having met with death, in an unexpected and violent form. In the course of the day, every one was amazed and awestruck to learn that a young man, a Quaker, who, during the time of public worship, had gone to bathe, had been drowned, and that, as it appeared, at the very moment when the preacher's mind was under this painful sense of suffering and death.

LADY ESMOND AND HER CHILDREN.

My great-grandmother—our aged relative here continues to speak—was a native of Ireland, and one of seven daughters. She married William Brownrigg, Esq., of Ormathwaite Hall, in Cumberland; and one of her sisters married Sir Thomas Esmond, of the county Wicklow. In this family of Esmond, it was believed that always before the occurrence of death in the family, a spectral figure, which on some occasions was seen to drag a chain up the great staircase of the hall, gave warning of the event.

The son and daughter of Lady Esmond, at that time grown up, came over into Cumberland, on a visit to their aunt. One morning, the brother entered the breakfast-room with a pale and anxious countenance, and being

questioned of the cause, he was at length induced to relate, with great agitation, that on the preceding night he had been visited by that forewarner of death which was well known to the house of Esmond, and which had announced to him a triple death in the family—his mother's, his own, and his sister's. Spite of the painful effect of these words, and the secret apprehensions which they excited, all endeavoured to laugh him out of his fears, and his firm belief. The following day, however, brought news which startled every one : a letter from Ireland announced the severe illness of the mother, and summoned her son and daughter home immediately. They embarked at Whitehaven for Ireland, but they never saw their mother alive; nor did they, in fact, reach Ireland. The vessel in which they sailed was wrecked, and they both perished.

THE QUAKERS DURING THE AMERICAN WAR.

George Dilwyn was an American, a remarkable preacher amongst the Quakers. About fifty years ago, he came over to this country, on what we have already said is termed a " Religious Visit," and being in Cornwall, when I was there, and at George Fox's, in Falmouth—our aged relative still narrates—soon became an object of great attraction, not only from his powerful preaching, but from his extraordinary gift in conversation, which he made singularly interesting from the introduction of curious passages in his own life and experience.

His company was so much sought after, that a general invitation was given, by his hospitable and wealthy entertainer, to all the Friends of the town and neighbourhood to come, and hear, and see him; and evening by evening, their rooms were crowded by visitors, who sat on seats, side by side, as in a public lecture-room.

Amongst other things, he related, that during the time

of the revolutionary war, one of the armies passing through a district in which a great number of Friends resided, food was demanded from the inhabitants, which was given to them. The following day the adverse army came up in pursuit, and stripped them of every kind of provision that remained; and so great was the strait to which they were reduced, that absolute famine was before them. Their sufferings were extreme, as day after day went on, and no prospect of relief was afforded them. Death seemed to stare them in the face, and many a one was ready to despair. The forests around them were in possession of the soldiers, and the game, which otherwise might have yielded them subsistence, was killed or driven away.

After several days of great distress, they retired at night, still without hope or prospect of succour. How great, then, was their surprise and cause of thankfulness when, on the following morning, immense herds of wild deer were seen standing around their enclosures, as if driven there for their benefit! From whence they came none could tell, nor the cause of their coming, but they suffered themselves to be taken without resistance; and thus the whole people were saved, and had great store of provisions laid up for many weeks.

Again, a similar circumstance occurred near the seashore, when the flying and pursuing armies had stripped the inhabitants, and when, apparently to add to their distress, the wind set in with such unusual violence, and the sea drove the tide so far inland, that the people near the shore were obliged to abandon their houses, and those in the town to retreat to their upper rooms. This also being during the night, greatly added to their distress; and, like the others, they were ready to despair. Next morning, however, they found that God had not been unmindful of

them; for the tide had brought up with it a most extraordinary shoal of mackerel, so that every place was filled with them, where they remained ready taken, without net or skill of man—a bountiful provision for the wants of the people, till other relief could be obtained.

Another incident he related, which occurred in one of the back settlements, when the Indians had been employed to burn the dwellings of the settlers, and cruelly to murder the people. One of these solitary habitations was in the possession of a Friend's family. They lived in such secure simplicity, that they had hitherto had no apprehension of danger, and used neither bar nor bolt to their door, having no other means of securing their dwelling from intrusion than by drawing in the leathern thong by which the wooden latch inside was lifted from without.

The Indians had committed frightful ravages all around, burning and murdering without mercy. Every evening brought forth tidings of horror, and every night the unhappy settlers surrounded themselves with such defences as they could muster—even then, for dread, scarcely being able to sleep. The Friend and his family, who had hitherto put no trust in the arm of flesh, but had left all in the keeping of God, believing that man often ran in his own strength to his own injury, had used so little precaution, that they slept without even withdrawing the string, and were as yet uninjured. Alarmed, however, at length, by the fears of others, and by the dreadful rumours that surrounded them, they yielded to their fears on one particular night, and, before retiring to rest, drew in the string, and thus secured themselves as well as they were able.

In the dead of the night, the Friend, who had not been able to sleep, asked his wife if she slept; and she replied that she could not, for her mind was uneasy. Upon this, he

confessed that the same was his case, and that he believed it would be the safest for him to rise and put out the string of the latch as usual. On her approving of this, it was done, and the two lay down again, commending themselves to the keeping of God.

This had not occurred above ten minutes, when the dismal sound of the war-whoop echoed through the forest, filling every heart with dread, and almost immediately afterwards, they counted the footsteps of seven men pass the window of their chamber, which was on the ground-floor, and the next moment the door-string was pulled, the latch lifted, and the door opened. A debate of a few minutes took place, the purport of which, as it was spoken in the Indian language, was unintelligible to the inhabitants; but that it was favourable to them was proved by the door being again closed, and the Indians retiring without having crossed the threshold.

The next morning, they saw the smoke rising from burning habitations all around them; parents were weeping for their children who were carried off, and children lamenting over their parents who had been cruelly slain.

Some years afterwards, when peace was restored, and the colonists had occasion to hold conferences with the Indians, this Friend was appointed as one for that purpose, and speaking in favour of the Indians, he related the above incident; in reply to which, an Indian observed, that, by the simple circumstance of putting out the latch-string, which proved confidence rather than fear, their lives and their property had been saved; for that he himself was one of that marauding party, and that, on finding the door open, it was said—"These people shall live; they will do us no harm, for they put their trust in the GREAT SPIRIT."

During the whole American revolution, indeed, the Indians, though incited by the whites to kill and scalp the

enemy, never molested the Friends, as the people of Father Onas, or William Penn, and as the avowed opponents of all violence. Through the whole war, there were but two instances to the contrary, and they were occasioned by the two Friends themselves. The one was a young man, a tanner, who went to his tanyard and back daily unmolested, while devastation spread on all sides; but, at length, thoughtlessly carrying a gun to shoot some birds, the Indians, in ambush, believed that he had deserted his principles, and shot him. The other was a woman, who, when the dwellings of her neighbours were nightly fired, and the people themselves murdered, was importuned by the officers of a neighbouring fort to take refuge there till the danger was over. For some time she refused, and remained unharmed amid general destruction; but, at length, letting in fear, she went for one night to the fort, but was so uneasy, that the next morning she quitted it to return to her home. The Indians, however, believed that she too had abandoned her principles, and joined the fighting part of the community, and before she reached home she was shot by them.

GEORGE BIDDULPH'S DREAM.

I am indebted to a friend for the following singular dream. In the year 1795, the Rev. George Biddulph, at that time chaplain to the Earl of ——, and my college associate, was in London. We spent much time together; and as he was a man of an earnest, serious turn of mind, our conversation was very much on religious subjects, he being anxious to dis sever me from the free-thinking principles of the French and German philosophy, to which I was at that time much addicted.

One day, being together at Woolwich, we took a stroll on Blackheath, when we accidentally came upon a young

man, who, having been overturned in a gig, had slightly injured his arm. The little service which we were enabled to render him, led to our spending the remainder of the day together; and as it was then hardly past noon, this consisted of several hours, which was sufficient to enable young men socially inclined to become tolerably familiar before parting.

Our new acquaintance informed us that he was Lieutenant Macintosh, in the service of the East India Company, and that the following day he was to embark for his destination. He was a young man of remarkably prepossessing appearance and lively manners. In the course of conversation, some words dropped from myself with reference to an unfinished argument with my clerical friend, on our often contested religious subjects. This led to the discovery that the young soldier was even more sceptically disposed than myself; and now, with such an ally, the argument was resumed, and continued till we were about to part, when the lieutenant, asserting his positive belief in no other life than the present, declared that if, after death, his soul really existed, and he died before his new clerical acquaintance, he would pay him a visit, and confess his error, adding, that he would not fail to enlighten me also.

We parted, and we saw the lieutenant no more, at least in this life. One remark I must make in this place, which is of importance, namely, that although the lieutenant had told us his name, he had not mentioned his family, nor his native place, nor had we inquired about them; and after that time, neither of us thought more of him, I believe, than is commonly thought of any passing, agreeable acquaintance, who has enabled us to spend an hour or two pleasantly.

One night, however, about three years afterwards, I

dreamed that I was sitting in my library as usual, when the door opened, and a young man entered, whom I immediately recognised to be Lieutenant Macintosh, though he was then wearing a captain's uniform. He looked much sunburnt, as one might naturally expect a man to be after about three years' exposure to a tropical sun. His countenance, however, was grave, and there was a peculiar expression in it, that even in my dream excited an unusual degree of attention. I motioned him to be seated, and without addressing him, waited for him to speak: he did so immediately, and his words were these:

“I promised, when we were at Woolwich together, to visit you if I died. I am dead, and have now kept my word. You can tell all your friends who are sceptics, that the soul does not perish with the body.”

When these words were ended, I awoke; and so distinctly were they, as it seemed, impressed upon my senses, that for the moment I could not believe but that they had been spoken to me by the actual tongue of man. I convinced myself that the chamber was empty, and then, remembering that immediately before going to bed I had been reading the mystical writings of Emanuel Swedenborg, I persuaded myself that this was but the effect of my excited imagination, and again slept.

The next morning, I regarded it merely as an ordinary dream. I was not a little surprised, therefore, when, early in the day, I received a visit from my friend Biddulph, who instantly accosted me with the inquiry, whether I had heard any news of that Lieutenant Macintosh, whose acquaintance we had accidentally made three years before. I related my dream. “Strange indeed!” he said; “then of a truth he is dead!” He then related, that the preceding night he also had a similar dream, with this difference, that it was twice repeated, and that each time he was

desired to write to ——, in Invernesshire, where his mother and sister lived, and to inform them of his death; the apparition each time adding, that his death would be a great affliction to them; and therefore he laid it earnestly on him to offer them all the consolation in his power.

After the first dream, Biddulph, like myself, in awakening, had persuaded himself that it was *merely* a dream; and after some time, had again slept, when it was repeated precisely as before; and then, on waking, he had risen, and written down not only the address, but a letter to the clergyman of the parish, inquiring from him if a family, such as had been intimated to him, lived at the place mentioned, but without giving him the reasons for this inquiry.

When day came, however, the whole thing seemed to him so extraordinary, that he determined to come and consult with me, who had known the young man equally as well as himself, before he took any decided step.

The whole thing appeared so strange, and so contrary to all human experience, that I could only advise him to send the letter, which he had written, to the clergyman, and be guided by his answer. We resolved not to mention the subject to any one, but we noted down the date and the hour of these remarkable dreams. A few posts afterwards settled the whole thing. Mrs. Macintosh and her daughter were living, as had been told in the dream, at ——; and the clergyman added, “that he hoped his correspondent had news to communicate respecting Captain Macintosh, about whom they were anxious. Thus, two points were proved; our lieutenant had become a captain, and his mother and sister were living at the address communicated in this dream; as a natural inference, therefore, the third fact was true also.

As the best means of communicating the sad intelligence

he had so singularly received, Biddulph determined to make a journey at once into Invernesshire; he did so, and, singularly enough, that visit ended in his marrying Miss Macintosh.

In the course of a few months, official tidings came of the death of Captain Macintosh, who had died by a *coup-de-soleil*, while hunting up the country with a party of brother officers, and the time of his death exactly corresponded with that of our dreams.

DREAM REVEALING THE RELATIONS OF SERGEANT B—, MURDERED AT PLYMOUTH.

The following dream, which in one respect corresponds with the foregoing, was written down by a general officer, at the request of Lady B—, to whom he related it, and is communicated to me by the daughter of the gentleman in question:—

THE RELATION OF A CIRCUMSTANCE WHICH OCCURRED TO ME WHEN I WAS A SUBALTERN, AND QUARTERED AT PLYMOUTH DOCK, IN THE YEAR 1786.

My captain (Downing) having obtained leave of absence, the command of the company devolved on me; and he informed me, on leaving, that he had promised a furlough to a man named Russell, and directed me to give it to him when he requested it. I sent for Russell, and informed him, that whenever he wished, I would give him a furlough, by desire of the captain. Some time elapsed, but he did not ask for it. I had one night a party of officers in my room; and it came on so dreadful a night of thunder, lightning, and rain, that they could not get away till near daylight; I then told my servant, when going to bed, not on any account to disturb me till I had had a good sleep.

It was scarcely daylight, when my servant came in and

told me that Russell had called to get his furlough signed. I was very angry at being disturbed; but he said that Russell was so impatient, that he abused him, and threatened to go away without it if it were not signed. I desired him to go out, and not disturb me again. In about two hours he returned, and informed me that Serjeant B— and his wife were murdered over at the Obelisk, at Mount Edgecombe, where the serjeant had been stationed in charge of a battery. This information made me start up; and on going into the next room, and seeing Russell's furlough lying on the table, I asked my servant where he was, and he told me that he had gone off. I then inquired who had brought the intelligence of the murder, and he said it was the doctor, who had been attending Mrs. B—, who had been very ill. It struck me as very strange, that Russell should be so impatient to go off that morning, when he might have gone on any other day, and at his leisure; so I ordered the whole of the company to go in search of him all over the town, and to bring him to the guard-room. He was found in an obscure part of the town, and brought up as directed. I went to interrogate him as to his conduct, and asked him where he was the night before; he replied that he was in the barracks, and had answered his name at roll-call. The orderly confirmed this, but added, that he was bloody when he came to barracks. I inquired how that happened; when he said, some sailors invited him to drink, and then wanted him to pay, which, on his refusing to do, they had a fight. I inquired where were his necessaries, but this he would not discover; so I sent to the place where he had been concealed, and there his clothes were found; and on examining them, several articles were marked with the name of B— and his wife. I then had no doubt left as to his being the perpetrator of the murder, and had him committed.

While the inquest was sitting, he sent for me to speak to him in private; this I would not do, but took my pay-sergeant with me, as a witness to whatever he might have to communicate. He acknowledged that he was the murderer. He said that he went to the house, and found Mrs. B— in bed; she asked him what he wanted, and desired him to go away, for that Sergeant B— would be very angry at finding him there. He then took up the axe, and struck her with it, and murdered her; he then commenced ransacking the house, and thus employed, he heard the sergeant coming home. He placed himself behind the door, and on his entering, he struck him with the axe, and murdered him also. He then collected every article that he could get, and carried them to Plymouth Dock, where he pawned whatever he could get money for. He was disappointed of getting thirty guineas, which it was understood B— carried about with him in a leathern belt, and to obtain which was the principal inducement to his commission of the murder. He was sent to Exeter jail, to await the approaching assizes.

Shortly after this occurrence, which took place in June or July, 1786, I dreamed that Sergeant B— appeared to me, just as I had seen him lying on the floor of his house—and a horrid figure he was; that he held out his hand to me, and that I gave him mine; and then that he pulled me close up to him by an irresistible force, and that I requested him not to bloody me, to which he replied that he would not, but that he had a request to make of me, which was that I would have justice done to his family for his murder; that he had a sister living at Hamilton Bawn, county Derry, whom he requested I would inform of the circumstance. I fell asleep, and again dreamed the same dream, which awoke me; and having the impression on my mind, that I had twice been warned in my dream, I got up, and wrote down the direction with my pencil;

and in the morning, as soon as I came down, I wrote a letter, and directed it accordingly; and in less than a fortnight Miss B— was in my quarters.

To this may be added a few words from the letter of the lady to whom I am indebted for the narrative.

Sergeant B— and his wife had no family, and no one in Plymouth knew anything of his native place or his relations. He was stationed at a distance from the rest of the regiment, and was wealthy for a man in his station, which was the cause of his murder. The important event in the dream was the disclosure of the name and residence of his sister, who was a single and unprotected woman. My father had never heard the name of the village where she lived; and lest he might forget it, he wrote it with his pencil in the dark, and the next morning sent off his letter on what might appear a visionary errand. The murderer not being discovered without a dream, seems, therefore, only an additional proof, that nothing which concerns his creatures is beneath the notice of a merciful Providence. The sergeant was a person of piety—so, I believe, was his sister; and although the sum of thirty pounds may appear small, yet to one in her situation it was great; at all events, God did not permit the unfortunate sergeant's nearest and dearest relative to be deprived of her just rights. She came all the way out of Ireland to Plymouth, which in those days was a serious undertaking, and proved her right to the possessions of her late brother.

THE DUTCH FISHERMAN'S WIFE.

The following singular narrative was kindly communicated to me by a lady of Newcastle-on-Tyne:

A dreadful storm raged for several days on the coast of Holland. One night, during its continuance, the wife of a fisherman, who lived in a hut on the shore, woke her hus-

band, saying, that she had had a frightful dream, in which she had seen a wreck not far from the shore, and that even then she fancied she could hear the cries of distress. The husband listened, but could perceive nothing but the raging of the storm, and the thundering of the billows upon the shore. He therefore urged his wife to sleep again, treating it merely as the excitement of a frightful dream.

The wife, who had in vain urged her husband to take his boat, to ascertain, at all events, whether a wreck really were in the situation she had dreamed of, after some time composed herself to sleep, and again dreamed precisely as before. Again she woke her husband, and told him her dream, describing to him exactly the spot where the wreck appeared to lie, and the miserably perishing state of the few survivors, whose cries still seemed to ring in her ears.

The husband, who had no inclination to brave all the horrors of this stormy night in his boat, merely on the strength of his wife's dream, positively refused, and treated it all as a mere fancy, caused by the tumult of the storm. The wife, on the contrary, on whose mind the dream had made the impression of absolute truth, and who was a woman of great resolution and courage, and quite competent to the management of a boat—as many of these fishermen's wives are—determined to go out by herself, to rescue these unfortunate wretches, who, she was convinced, stood in such need of help. The man, however, either shamed by her courage, or unwilling that she should peril herself alone in such a hazardous attempt, and finding every effort to alter her purpose vain, consented to accompany her. The boat, therefore, was launched, she directing, according to her dream, the course which they should steer.

Before long, they discovered that the dream really was

true. At the point where she had stated lay the wreck, with several human beings fastened upon it—as far as I can recollect, about ten—some dead, and the others in the most dreadful state of destitution and hunger, and consequently, reduced to such a degree of weakness, that their voices were scarcely audible above a whisper; so that the cries of distress, which she seemed to hear, did not proceed from them.

The few survivors were taken by the fisherman and his wife into their boat, and conveyed to their hut, where such assistance was given them as their small means could afford, but which sufficed until better aid could be obtained.

The shipwrecked vessel was the *British Queen*; the captain, whose name was Grainger, was, unfortunately, one of the dead.

One of the sailors who was saved, when he was able to continue his voyage, was brought to my father's house, under very peculiar circumstances. At that time, the pressgangs were the pests of our seaport towns; and this poor fellow, being in danger of being taken by one of them, was secreted for some time in a garret in our house—in deed, until another ship could be found for him.

But enough of what the old Friends called these Providences, for one winter's evening. Still more extraordinary, perhaps, and indeed the most extraordinary cases of the kind, are those recorded in the lives of two of the most eminently pious men of recent time—those of Doctor Doddridge, and the late Doctor Adam Clarke. Doctor Doddridge relates that, being accidentally driven to seek refuge from a storm, at the house of a gentleman who was a stranger to him, and staying all night there, discovered, through the medium of a dream, the missing writings of the gentleman's estate, without which, the gentleman was

in danger of losing the property. And the son of Doctor Adam Clarke relates the most singular dream, with all its circumstances, as dreamt on the same night by Doctor Clarke, then in the Isle of Man, and by his wife, then at home, and which induced the doctor to return home shortly before his decease. The son was told the dream by his father, walking on the shore of the Isle of Man; and on their immediate return, leaving his father for the night in Liverpool, and hastening home to announce his coming the next day, and to prevent surprise, was met at the door by his mother, in great alarm, and received from her precisely the same dream, and all its particulars, which had impressed her with the belief that her husband was dead, or would soon die—as he did. But, as already said, we will here poke the fire, and brighten the winter-evening nook with a pleasant story.

THE DISASTERS OF HANS NADELTREIBER.

There are a multitude of places in this wide world, that we never heard of since the day of creation, and that never would become known to a soul beyond their own ten miles of circumference, except to those universal discoverers, the tax-gatherers, were it not that some sparks of genius may suddenly kindle there, and carry their fame through all countries and all generations. This has been the case many times, and will be the case again. We are now destined to hear the sound of names that our fathers never dreamed of; and there are other spots, now basking in God's blessed sunshine, of which the world knows and cares nothing, that shall, to our children, become places of worship and pilgrimage. Something of this sort of glory was cast upon the little town of Rapps, in Bohemia, by the hero whose name stands conspicuously at the head of this page, and whose pleasant adventures I flatter my-

self I am destined to diffuse still further. Hans Nadeltreiber was the son of Mr. Strauss Nadeltreiber, who had, as well as his ancestors before him, for six generations, practised, in the same little place, that most gentlemanly of all professions, a tailor—seeing that it was before all others, and was used and sanctioned by our father Adam.

Now Hans, from boyhood up, was a remarkable person. His father had known his share of troubles, and having two sons, both older than Hans, naturally looked in his old age to reap some comfort and assistance from their united labours. But the two elder sons successively had fled from the shop-board. One had gone for a soldier, and was shot; the other had learned the craft of a weaver, but being too fond of his pot, had broken his neck by falling into a quarry, as he went home one night from a carousal. Hans was left the sole staff for the old man to lean upon; and truly a worthy son he proved himself. He was as gentle as a dove, and as tender as a lamb. A cross word from his father, when he had made a cross stitch, would almost break his heart; but half a word of kindness revived him again.—and he seldom went long without it; for the old man, though rendered rather testy and crabbed in his temper, by his many troubles and disappointments, was naturally of a loving, compassionate disposition, and, moreover, regarded Hans as the apple of his eye.

Hans was of a remarkably light, slender, active make, full of life and mettle. This moment he was on the board, stitching away with as much velocity as if he were working for a funeral or a wedding, at an hour's notice; the next, he was despatching his dinner at the same rate; and the third beheld him running, leaping, and playing among his companions, as blithe as a young kid. If he had a fault, it was being too fond of his fiddle. This was his everlasting delight. One would have thought that his elbow had

labour enough, with jerking his needle some thirty thousand times a-day ; but it was in him a sort of universal joint—it never seemed to know what weariness was. His fiddle stood always on the board in a corner by him, and no sooner had he ceased to brandish his needle, than he began to brandish his fiddlestick. If ever he could be said to be lazy, it was when his father was gone out to measure, or try on ; and his fiddle being too strong a temptation for him, he would seize upon it, and labour at it with all his might, till he spied his father turning his next corner homewards. Nevertheless, with this trifling exception, he was a pattern of filial duty ; and now the time was come that his father must die—his mother was dead long before ; and he was left alone in the world with his fiddle. The whole house, board, trade—what there was of it—all was his. When he came to take stock, and make an inventory—in his head—of what he was worth, it was by no means such as to endanger his entrance into heaven at the proper time. Naturally enough, he thought of the Scripture simile of the rich man, and the cable getting through the eye of a needle ; but it did not frighten him. His father never had much beforehand, when he had the whole place to himself ; and now, behold ! another knight of the steel-bar had come from—nobody knew where—a place often talked of, yet still a *terra incognita* ; had taken a great house opposite, hoisted a tremendous sign, and threatened to carry away every shred of Hans' business.

In the depth of his trouble, he took to his fiddle, from his fiddle to his bed, and in his bed he had a dream—I thought we had done with these dreams!—in which he was assured, that could he once save the sum of fifty dollars, it would be the seed of a fortune ; that he should flourish far beyond the scale of old

Strauss; should drive his antagonist, in utter despair, from the ground; and should, in short, arrive eventually at no less a dignity than—Bürgermeister of Rapps!

Hans was, as I believe I have said, soon set up with the smallest spice of encouragement. He was, moreover, as light and nimble as a grasshopper, and, in his whole appearance, much such an animal, could it be made to stand on end. His dream, therefore, was enough. He vowed a vow of unconquerable might, and to it he went. Springing upon his board, he hummed a tune gaily:

There came the Hippopotamus,
A sort of river-bottom-horse,
Sneezing, snorting, blowing water
From his nostrils, and around him
Grazing up the grass—confound him!
Every mouthful a huge slaughter!

Beetle, grasshopper, and May-fly,
From his muzzle must away fly,
Or he swallowed them by legions;
His huge foot, it was a pillar;
When he drank, it was a swiller!
Soon a desert were those regions.

But the grasshoppers so gallant
Called to arms each nimble callant,
With their wings, and stings, and nippers;
Bee, and wasp, and hornet, awful;
Gave the villain such a jawful,
That he slipped away in slippers!

“Ha! ha!—slipped down into the mud that he emerged from!” cried Hans, and, seizing his fiddle, dashed off the Hippopotamus in a style that did him a world of good, and makes us wish that we had the musical notes of it. Then he fell to, and day and night he wrought. Work came; it was done. He wanted little—a crust of bread, and a merry tune, were enough for him. His money grew; the sum was nearly accomplished, when, returning one

evening from carrying out some work—behold! his door was open! Behold! the lid of his pot where he deposited his treasure was off! The money was gone!

This was a terrible blow. Hans raised a vast commotion. He did not even fail to insinuate that it might be the interloper opposite—the Hippopotamus. Who so likely as he, who had his eye continually on Hans' door? But no matter—the thief was clear off; and the only comfort he got from his neighbours, was being rated for his stinginess. “Ay,” said they, “this comes of living like a curmudgeon, in a great house by yourself, working your eyes out to hoard up money. What must a young man like you do with scraping up pots full of money, like a miser? It is a shame!—it is a sin!!—it is a judgment!!! Nothing better could come of it. At all events, you might afford to have a light burning in the house. People are ever likely to rob you. They see a house as dark as an oven; they see nobody in it: they go in and steal; nobody can see them come out—and that is just it. But were there a light burning, they would always think there was somebody in. At all events, you might have a light.”

“There is something in that,” said Hans. He was not at all unreasonable; so he determined to have a light in future: and he fell to work again.

Bad as his luck had been, he resolved not to be cast down: he was as diligent and as thrifty as ever; and he resolved, when he became *Bürgermeister* of Rapps, to be especially severe on sneaking thieves, who crept into houses that were left to the care of Providence and the municipal authorities. A light was everlastingly burning in his window; and the people, as they passed in the morning, said, “This man must have a good business that requires him to be up thus early;” and they who passed in the evening, said, “This man must be making a fortune, for he is busy

early and late." At length Hans leaped down from his board with the work that was to complete his sum, a second time; went; returned, with the future Bürgermeister growing rapidly upon him; when, as he turned the corner of the street—men and mercies!—what a spectacle! His house was in a full burst of flame, illuminating, with a ruddy glow, half the town, and all the faces of the inhabitants, who were collected to witness the catastrophe. Money, fiddle, shop-board—all were consumed! and when poor Hans danced and capered, in the very ecstasy of his distraction—"Ay," said his neighbours, "this comes of leaving a light in an empty house. It was just the thing to happen. Why don't you get somebody to take care of things in your absence?"

Hans stood corrected; for, as I have said, he was soon touched to the quick, and though in his anger he did think it rather unkind that they, who advised the light, now prophesied after the event, when that was a little abated, he thought there was reason in what they now said. So, bating not a jot of his determination to save, and to be Bürgermeister of Rapps, he took the very next house, which luckily happened to be at liberty, and he got a journeyman. For a long time, his case appeared hard and hopeless. He had to pay three hundred per cent. for the piece of a table, two stools, and a couple of bags of hay, which he had procured of a Jew, and which, with an odd pot, and a wooden spoon or two, constituted all his furniture. Then, he had two mouths to feed instead of one; wages to pay; and not much more work done than he could manage himself. But still—he had dreamed; and dreams, if they are genuine, fulfil themselves. The money grew—slowly, very slowly, but still it grew; and Hans pitched upon a secure place, as he thought, to conceal it in. Alas! poor Hans! He had often in his heart grumbled

at the slowness of his *Handwerks-Bursch*, or journeyman; but the fellow's eyes had been quick enough, and he proved himself a hand-work's fellow to some purpose, by clearing out Hans' hiding-place, and becoming a journeyman in earnest. The fellow was gone one morning; no great loss—but then the money was gone with him, which *was* a terrible loss.

This was more than Hans could bear. He was perfectly cast down, disheartened, and inconsolable. At first, he thought of running after the fellow; and, as he knew the scamp could not go far without a passport, and as Hans had gone the round of the country himself, in the three years of his *Wandel-Jahre*, as required by the worshipful guild of tailors, he did not doubt but that he should some day pounce upon the scoundrel. But then, in the mean time, who was to keep his trade together? There was the Hippopotamus watching opposite! No! it would not do! and, his neighbour, coming in to condole with him, said—"Cheer up, man! there is nothing amiss yet. What signify a few dollars? You will soon get plenty more, with those nimble fingers of yours. You want only somebody to help you to keep them. You must get a wife! Journeymen were thieves from the first generation. You must get married!"

"Get married!" thought Hans. He was struck all on a heap at the very mention of it. "Get married! What! fine clothes to go a-wooing in, and fine presents to go a-wooing with; and parson's fees, and clerk's fees; and wedding-dinner, and dancing, and drinking; and then, doctor's fees, and nurse's fees, and children without end! That is ruin!" thought Hans—"without end!" The fifty dollars and the *Bürgermeistership*—they might wait till doomsday.

"Well, that is good!" thought Hans, as he took a little

more breath. "They first counselled me to get a light;—then went house and all in a bonfire; next, I must get a journeyman—then went the money; and now they would have me bring more plagues upon me than Moses brought upon Egypt. Nay, nay!" thought Hans; "you'll not catch me there, neither."

Hans all this time was seated upon his shop-board, stitching, at an amazing rate, upon a garment which the rascally Wagner should have finished to order at six o'clock that morning, instead of decamping with his money; and, ever and anon, so far forgetting his loss in what appeared to him the ludicrousness of this advice, as freely to laugh out. All that day, the idea continued to run in his head; the next, it had lost much of its freshness; the third, it appeared not so odd as awful; the fourth, he began to ask himself whether it might be quite so momentous as his imagination had painted it; the fifth, he really thought it was not so bad neither; the sixth, it had so worked round in his head, that it had fairly got on the other side, and appeared clearly to have its advantages—children did not come scampering into the world all at once, like a flock of lambs into a meadow—a wife might help to gather, as well as spend—might possibly bring something of her own—aye! a new idea!—would be a perpetual watch and storekeeper in his absence—might speak a word of comfort, in troubles when even his fiddle was dumb; on the seventh—he was off! Whither?

Why, it so happened that in his "wander-years," Hans had played his fiddle at many a dance—a very dangerous position; for his chin resting on "the merry bit of wood," as the ancient Friend termed that instrument, and his head leaned on one side, he had had plenty of opportunity to watch the movements of plenty of fair maids in the dance, as well as occasionally to whirl them round in the

everlasting waltz himself. Accordingly, Hans had left his heart many times, for a week or ten days or so, behind him, in many a town and dorf of Bohemia and Germany; but it always came after him and overtook him again, except on one occasion. Amongst the damsels of the Böhmer-Wald who had danced to the sound of his fiddle, there was a certain substantial bergman's or master-miner's daughter, who, having got into his head in some odd association with his fiddle, was continually coming up as he played his old airs, and could not be got out again, especially as he fancied that the comely and simple-hearted creature had a lurking fondness for both his music and himself.

Away he went: and he was right. The damsel made no objection to his overtures. Tall, stout, fresh, pleasant growth of the open air and the hills, as she was, she never dreamed of despising the little skipping tailor of Rapps, though he was shorter by the head than herself. She had heard his music, and evidently had danced after it. The fiddler and fiddle together filled up her ambition. But the old people!—they were in perfect hysterics of wrath and indignation. Their daughter!—with the exception of one brother, now absent on a visit to his uncle in Hungary, a great gold-miner in the Carpathian mountains, the sole remnant of an old, substantial house, which had fed their flocks and their herds on the hills for three generations, and now drew wealth from the heart of these hills themselves! It was death! poison! pestilence! The girl must be mad; the hop-o'-my-thumb scoundrel must carry witch powder!

Nevertheless, as Hans and the damsel were agreed, everything else—threats, denunciations, sarcasms, cuttings-off with a shilling, and loss of a ponderous dowry—all went for nothing. They were married, as some thousands were before them in just the like circumstances. But if the

Bohemian maid was not mad, it must be confessed that Hans was rather so. He was monstrously exasperated at the contempt heaped by the heavy bergman on the future *Bürgermeister* of Rapps, and determined to show a little spirit. As his fiddle entered into all his schemes, he resolved to have music at his wedding; and no sooner did he and his bride issue from the church, than out broke the harmony which he had provided. The fiddle played merrily, "You'll repent, repent, repent; you'll repent, repent, repent;" and the bassoon answered, in surly tones, "And soon! and soon!" "I hope, my dear," said the bride, "You don't mean the words for us." "No, love," explained Hans, gallantly; "I don't say we," "but you"—that is, certain haughty people on these hills, that shall be nameless. Then the music played till they reached the inn where they dined, and then set off in a handsome hired carriage for Rapps.

It is true, that there was little happiness in this affair to any one. The old people were full of anger, curses, and threats of total disownment. Hans' pride was pricked and perforated, till he was as sore as if he had been tattooed with his own needle; and his wife was completely drowned in sorrow at such a parting with her parents, and with no little sense of remorse for her disobedience. Nevertheless, they reached home; things began gradually to assume a more composed aspect. Hans loved his wife; she loved him; he was industrious, she was careful; and they trusted, in time, to bring her parents round, when they should see that they were doing well in the world.

Again the saving scheme began to haunt Hans; but he had one luckless notion, which was destined to cost him no little vexation. With the stock of the shop, he had inherited from his father a stock of old maxims, which, unluckily, had not got burnt in the fire with the rest of the

patrimonial heritage. Amongst these was one, that a woman cannot keep a secret. Acting on this creed, Hans not only never told his wife of the project of becoming *Bürgermeister* of Rapps, but he did not even give her reason to suppose that he laid up a shilling; and that she might not happen to stumble upon his money, he took care to carry it always about him. It was his delight, when he got into a quiet corner, or as he came along a retired lane, from his errands, to take it out and count it; and calculate when it would amount to this and that sum, and when the full sum would be really his own. Now, it happened one day, that having been a good deal absorbed in these speculations, he had loitered a precious piece of time away; and suddenly coming to himself, he set off, as was his wont, on a kind of easy trot, in which, his small, light form thrown forward, his pale, grey-eyed, earnest-looking visage thrown up towards the sky, and his long blue coat flying in a stream behind him, he cut one of the most extraordinary figures in the world; and checking his pace as he entered the town, he involuntarily clapped his hand on his pocket, and behold! his money was gone! It had slipped away through a hole it had worn. In the wildness and bitterness of his loss, he turned back, heartily cursing the spinner and the weaver of that most detestable piece of buckram that composed his breeches-pocket, for having put it together so villanously that it broke down with the carriage of a few dollars, halfpence, thimbles, balls of wax and thread, and a few other sundries, after the trifling wear of seven years, nine months, and nineteen days.

He was peering, step by step, after his lost treasure, when up came his wife, running like one wild, and telling him that he must come that instant; for the *Ritter* of *Flachenflaps* had brought in new liveries for all his ser-

vants, and threatened if he did not see Hans in five minutes, he would carry the work over to the other side of the street. There was a perplexity! The money was not to be found, and if it were found in the presence of his wife, he would regard it as no better than lost. He was therefore obliged to excuse his conduct, being caught in the act of poring after something, to tell, if not a lie, at least the very smallest part of the truth, and say that he had lost his thimble. The money was not found, and to make bad worse, he was in danger of losing a good job, and all the Ritter's work for ever, as a consequence.

Away he ran, therefore, groaning inwardly, at full speed, and, arriving out of breath, saw the Ritter's carriage drawn up at his opponent's door. Wormwood upon wormwood! His money was lost; his best customer was lost, and thrown into the jaws of the detested Hippopotamus. There he beheld him and his man in a prime bustle from day to day, while his own house was deserted. All people went where the Ritter went, of course. The Hippopotamus was now grazing and browsing through Hans' richest meadows with a vengeance. He was flourishing out of all bounds. He had got a horse to ride out on and take orders, and to all appearance was likely to become Bürgermeister ten years before Hans had got ten dollars of his own.

It was too much for even his sanguine temperament; he sank down to the very depths of despair; his fiddle had lost its music; he could not abide to hear it; he sate moody and disconsolate, with a beard an inch long. His wife for some time hoped it would go off; but, seeing it come to this, she began to console and advise, to rouse his courage and his spirits. She told him it was that horse which gave the advantage to his neighbour. While he went trudging on foot, wearying himself, and wasting his time,

people came, grew weary, and would not wait. She offered, therefore, to borrow her neighbour's ass for him; and advised him to ride out daily a little way. It would look as though he had business in the country. It would look as if his time was precious; it would look well, and do his health good into the bargain. Hans liked her counsel; it sounded well—nay, exceedingly discreet. He always thought her a gem of a woman, but he never imagined her half so able. What a pity a woman could not be trusted with a secret! Were it not for that, she would be a helpmate past all reckoning.

The ass, however, was got: out rode Hans; looked amazingly hurried; and, being half-crazed with care, people thought he was half-crazed with stress of business. Work came in; things went flowingly on again; Hans blessed his stars; and as he grasped his cash, he every day stitched it into the crown of his cap, taking paper-money for the purpose. No more pots, no more hiding-holes, no more breeches-pockets, for him; he put it under the guardianship of his own strong thread and dexterous needle; and all went on exceedingly well.

Accidents will, however, occur, if men will not trust their wives; and especially if they will not avoid awkward habits. Now, Hans had a strange habit of sticking his needles on his breeches-knees as he sat at work; and sometimes he would have half-a-dozen on each knee for half-a-dozen days. His wife often told him to take them out when he came down from his board, and often took them out herself; but it was of no use. He was just in this case one day as he rode out to take measure of a gentleman, about five miles off. The ass, to his thinking, was in a remarkably brisk mood. Off it went, without whip or spur, at a good active trot, and, not satisfied with trotting, soon fairly proceeded to a gallop. Hans was full

of wonder at the beast. Commonly it tired his arm worse with thrashing it during his hour's ride, than the exercise of his goose and sleeve-board did for a whole day; but now he was fain to pull it in. It was to no purpose; faster than ever it dashed on, prancing, running sideways, wincing, and beginning to show a most ugly temper. What, in the name of all Balaams, could possess the animal, he could not for his life conceive! The only chance of safety appeared to lie in clinging with both arms and legs to it, like a boa-constrictor to its victim, when, shy!—away it flew, as if it were driven by a legion of devils. In another moment, it stopped; down went its head, up went its infernal heels; and Hans found himself some ten yards off, in the middle of a pool. He escaped drowning, but the cap was gone; he had been foolish enough to stitch some dollars, in hard cash, recently received, into it along with his paper, and they sunk it, past recovery! He came home, dripping like a drowned mouse, with a most deplorable tale; but with no more knowledge of the cause of his disaster than the man in the moon, till he tore his fingers on the needles, in abstracting his wet clothes.

Fortune now seemed to have said, as plainly as she could speak, "Hans, confide in your wife. You see all your schemes without her fail. Open your heart to her—deal fairly, generously, and you will reap the merits of it." It was all in vain—he had not yet come to his senses. Obstinate as a mule—he determined to try once more. But good-bye to the ass! The only thing he resolved to mount was his shop-board—that bore him well, and brought him continual good, could he only continue to keep it.

His wife, I said, came from the mountains; she, therefore, liked the sight of trees. Now, in Hans' back-yard there was neither tree nor turf, so she got some tubs, and in them she planted a variety of fir-trees, which made a

pleasant appearance, and gave a help to her imagination of the noble firs of her native scenes. In one of these tubs, Hans conceived the singular design of depositing his future treasure. "Nobody will meddle with them," he thought, so, accordingly, from week to week, he concealed in one of them his acquisitions. It had gone on a long time. He had been out one day, collecting some of his debts—he had succeeded beyond his hopes, and came back exulting. The sum was saved; and, in the gladness of his heart, he bought his wife a new gown. He bounded into the house, with the lightness of seventeen. His wife was not there—he looked into the back-yard. Saints and angels! what is that? He beheld his wife busy with the tubs. The trees were uprooted, and laid on the ground, and every particle of soil was thrown out of the tubs. In the delirium of consternation, he flew to ask what she had been doing.

"Oh! the trees, poor things, did not flourish; they looked sickly and pining; she determined to give them some soil more suitable to their natures; she had thrown the earth into the river, at the bottom of the yard."

"And you have thrown into the river," exclaimed Hans, frantically, "the hoarding of three years; the money which had cost me many a weary day—many an anxious night. The money which would have made our fortunes—in short, that would have made me *Bürgermeister* of Rapps." Completely thrown off his guard, he betrayed his secret.

"Good gracious!" cried his wife, exceedingly alarmed; "why did you not tell me of it?"

"Ay, that is the question!" said he. And it was a question; for, spite of himself, it had occurred to his mind some dozens of times, and now it came so overwhelmingly, that even when he thought he treated it with contempt, it had fixed itself upon his better reason, and never left

him till it had worked a most fortunate revolution. He said to himself, "Had I told my wife of it at the first, it could not possibly have happened worse; and it is very likely it would have happened better. For the future, then, be it so."

Thereupon, he unfolded to her the whole history and mystery of his troubles, and his hopes. Now, Mrs. Hans Nadeltreiber had great cause to feel herself offended, most grievously offended; but she was not at all of a touchy temperament. She was a sweet, tender, patient, loving creature, who desired her husband's honour and prosperity beyond anything; so she sate down, and in the most mild, yet acute and able manner, laid down to him a plan of operations, and promised him such aids and succours, that, struck at once with shame, contrition, and admiration, he sprung up, clasped her to his heart, called her the very gem of womanhood, and skipped two or three times across the floor, like a man gone out of his senses. The truth is, however, he was but just come into them.

From this day, a new life was begun in Hans' house. There he sat at his work; there sat his wife by his side, aiding and contriving with a woman's wit, a woman's love, and a woman's adroitness. She was worth ten journeymen. Work never came in faster; never gave such satisfaction; never brought in so much money; nor, besides this, was there ever such harmony in the house, nor had they ever held such delectable discourse together. There was nothing to conceal. Hans' thoughts flowed like a great stream; and when they grew a little wild and visionary, as they were apt to do, his wife smoothed and reduced them to sobriety, with such a delicate touch, that, so far from feeling offended, he was delighted beyond expression with her prudence. The fifty dollars were raised in almost no time; and, as if prognostic of its becoming

the seed of a fortune, it came in most opportunely for purchasing a lot of cloth, which more than trebled its cost, and gave infinite satisfaction to his customers. Hans saw that the tide was rapidly rising with him, and his wife urged him to push on with it; to take a larger house; to get more hands; and to cut such a figure as should at once eclipse his rival. The thing was done; but as their capital was still found scanty enough for such an undertaking, Mrs. Nadeltreiber resolved to try what she could do to increase it.

I should have informed the reader, had not the current of Hans' disasters ran too strong for me, that his wife's parents were dead, and had died without giving her any token of reconciliation—a circumstance which, although it cut her to the heart, did not quite cast her down, feeling that she had done nothing but what a parent might forgive, being all of us creatures alike liable to error, demanding alike some little indulgence for our weaknesses and our fancies. Her brother was now sole representative of the family; and knowing the generosity of his nature, she determined to pay him a visit, although, for the first time since her marriage, in a condition very unfit for travelling. She went. Her brother received her with all his early affection. In his house was born her first child; and so much did she and her bantling win upon his heart, that when the time came that she must return, nothing would serve but he would take her himself. She had been so loud in Hans' praise, that he determined to go and shake him by the hand. It would have done any one good to have seen this worthy mountaineer setting forth, seated in his neat, green-painted wicker wagon; his sister by his side, and the child snugly-bedded in his own corn-hopper at their feet. Thus did they go statelily, with his great black horse drawing them. It would have

been equally pleasant to see him set down his charge at the door of Hans' house, and behold with wonder that merry mannikin, all smiles and gesticulation, come forth to receive them. The contrast between Hans and his brother-in-law was truly amusing. He, a shadow-like homunculus, so light and dry, that any wind threatened to blow him before it; the bergman, with a countenance like the rising sun, the statue of a giant, and limbs like an elephant. Hans watched, with considerable anxiety, the experiment of his kinsman seating himself in a chair. The chair, however, stood firm; and the good man surveyed Hans, in return, with a curious and critical air, as if doubtful whether he must not hold him in contempt for the want of that solid matter of which he himself had too much. Hans' good qualities, however, got the better of him. "The man's a man, though," said he to himself, very philosophically, "and as he is good to my sister, he shall know of it." Hans delighted him every evening by the powers of his violin; and the bergman, excessively fond of music, like most of his countrymen, declared that he might perform in the Emperor's orchestra, and find nobody there to beat him. When he took his leave, therefore, he seized one of Hans' hands with a cordial gripe that was felt through every limb, and into the other he put a bag of one thousand rix dollars, saying, "My sister ought not to have come dowerless into a good husband's house. This is properly her own: take it, and much good may it do you."

Our story need not be prolonged. The new tailor soon fled before the star of Hans' ascendancy. A very few years saw him installed into the office of *Bürgermeister*, the highest of earthly honours in his eyes; and if he had one trouble left, it was only in the reflection that he might have attained his wishes years before had he understood the heart of a good woman. The worshipful Herr *Bürgermeister*,

and Frau Bürgermeesterin of Rapps, often visited their colossal brother of the Böhmerwald, and were thought to reflect no discredit on the old bergman family.

And so passes Christmas, with its holly and kissing-bushes, and waites, and Christmas-boxes; its roast beef, plum-pudding, story-telling, and mince-pies—for those who can get them; and for those who cannot, there comes anon—a New Year! Pray God it may be really A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR.

Thus come we, however happy or unhappy, prosperous or unprosperous, to the end of our month and of our year. If we have nothing else to congratulate the most unfortunate upon, let us at least take such a true view of existence as to congratulate them upon *that*. For in that is included hope, hope of better times, of more balmy seasons, and of immortality—a godlike gift!

In that feeling be our closing lay of the year:

GOD AND GOOD EVERYWHERE AND FOR EVER.

I love to see a city street,
 With all its living swarm;
 Men, women, coaches, carts, to meet,
 Children with bright eyes and quick words,
 And infants that, like little birds,
 Sit perch'd upon the arm.

Yet not the less I love to go,
 Leaving all these behind,
 To where the brooks and rivers flow,
 And where the wide sky may be seen,
 Where flowers are sweet and leaves are green,
 And stirring in the wind.

'Tis merry, merry in the spring,
 And merry in the summer time,
 And merry when the great winds sing
 Through autumn-woodlands brown—
 When from the tall trees scatter down,
 Ripe acorns fringed with rime.

And in the winter, wild and cold,
 'Tis merry, merry too;
Then man and boy are blithe and bold;
 Then rings the skate upon the ice;
 Then comes the hoar-frost in a trice,
 And everything is new.

Free are the woods and hills! There dwell
 Creatures that serve not man—
Glad things, that neither buy nor sell,
 That want not aught we have to give,
 That ask us not for leave to live,
 But live just as they can.

To God who made and loves them all
 They hymn their praise serene;
Things great, things wondrous, things so small
 Their very forms escape your sight—
 Two worlds of beauty and delight—
 The hidden and the seen.

When first leaves cluster on the trees,
 And spring-flowers star the ground;
And birds come o'er the southern seas,
 And build their nests and sing aloud;
And insects, a gay shining crowd,
 Glitter and hum around.

When winter comes, and beasts and men,
 Retreating from the field,
Seek fire-lit house, and winter den;
 In town or country still the same,
 God's love all living things proclaim,
 Their good all seasons yield.

Therefore, for us let seasons change;
 Let the sun shine, or tempests rage;
Through street or forest still we'll range,
 And find God present in each spot,
 His guiding hand in every lot;
 His grace from age to age.

NEW YEAR'S EVE.

As we have written, our planet has rolled on its sublime course, and has brought the year and our task to their last moments. A few more hours and another circle of the seasons has been completed: adding one more to the years

of the past, and stamping on myriads of human creatures another sum of the irrevocable. It is not surprising that men universally pause at this point of time, and look backward and again forward with deep seriousness. If we could collect the sum of events; of changed, advanced, or ruined fortunes, that any one year has seen, on this one globe, it were enough to make the lightest mind solemnly reflective. In every region, in the forest of the savage, in the Christian city, in the hut of the artisan, in the palace of the prince, where men have dwelt in solitude, and where they have existed in swarming thousands,—everywhere the pencil of Time has been busy marking down, in the dullest year, the tragic and the comic, the startling and the affecting, in such an amount as would employ the pen of the most voluminous chronicler, or the most gifted genius, with matter that would tax their highest powers. It is over a host of the most extraordinary things that the year is closing. All those circumstances and occurrences that can surround human life—the births of our children, the deaths of our parents, the marriages and removals to distant climes of our friends, have agitated the current of the year gone by. It has certainly had no exemption from its share of the mirthful, the mournful, or the marvellous. There have been new phases of empires as well as of private life that have astonished us. There have been the usual watchings and weepings by the curtains of the bed of death. There have been tears, trials, and triumphs, mingled with their wonted strangeness. In one dwelling laughter, in another profoundest grief—yet, through all the world has held on its august course—planting deep in the heart, that has not lived in vain, the feeling of reliance alone on the One immoveable and immutable Existence of the Universe—the one God and Father, good, true, and eternal.

It is in the spirit of this sentiment that men everywhere

are disposed at this impressive moment to worship and to rejoice. It is an hour to reveal equally the majesty and the loving-kindness of the Creator. Therefore, in Catholic countries the churches are opened. There the old year is closed, and the new one opened. There is a sermon as midnight approaches; in many places the lights are extinguished, leaving alone conspicuous a huge cross reaching from the bottom to near the top of the church, illumined with lamps. When twelve has struck, an anthem of thanksgiving strikes up, and mass is celebrated.

In all Christian countries New Year's Eve has been celebrated as a festival. In the churches there was service, in the houses rejoicing and merry-making. The wassail bowl, adorned with ribands and gilded apples, was carried from house to house, amongst our Saxon ancestors, by young maidens who sang a wassail song, which may be found in "Brand's Antiquities." This wassail bowl, in our monasteries, was placed on the abbot's table, and stiled the *Poculum Charitatis*. In our universities it is still the *Grace Cup*, and in the guilds of London the *Loving Cup*.

The Methodists have seized on the custom of the ancient Church in their "Watch Night," and have engrafted on modern life one of its most picturesque and solemn practices. They crowd into their chapels for a midnight service, and, as the hour of twelve approaches, they all kneel down and remain in silence, watching the departing moments of the year; and the instant that the clock strikes twelve, they all rise to their feet, and burst forth with a hymn of thanksgiving. From the steeples and towers of all the churches, the whole land over, peal forth the bells, ringing the old year out, and the new year in. There is something poetically beautiful in the idea, that at the same moment the bells from the proud towers

of gay cities and the humble turrets of rural village churches are all ringing the great fact of the end of one, and the beginning of another, year of our lives. There is something still more solemn in the thought of the many thousands of our fellow-creatures who are at the same moment listening to these bells, either amid the gay scenes of evening festivities, or, awoke from their early slumbers, are reflecting on what the past year has brought them of good or evil, and anticipations of what the coming year shall bring. Happy are they who are prepared to solemnise this ancient custom with the great and beautiful sentiment of our ancestors, of leaving all the animosities of the past to perish with the past, and to begin the new year with new heart as well as new hope.

In my "Rural and Social Life of Germany" I have described fully the gaieties and customs of New Year's Eve. It is perhaps the most merry time of the whole German year. There is service in the churches during the day; business is at a stand, and in the evening in almost every house is a joyous party amusing themselves with a variety of games, charade-acting, and presenting complimentary verses, besides feasting, and drinking to each other a happy new year. If you are gone to bed, your servants will knock at your door to shout "*Prost Neu Jahr!*"—prost, being a contraction of the Latin *prosit*. Without there is plenty of firing of guns, and within of dancing.

The Dutch, a kindred nation, carried over their national customs to America; and singular enough one of their chief features of New Year's Eve is the arrival of Santo Claus, who is no other than our old friend Pelz Nickel of Germany and the north. He is, in fact, the good St. Nicholas of Russia, the patron saint of all children. He arrives in Germany about a fortnight before Christmas;

but, as may be supposed, from all the visits he has to pay there, and the length of the voyage, he does not reach America till this evening. We have him in an American engraving sitting before the empty fireplace of an American house, with his feet on the old-fashioned dog, a little after midnight, all the family having retired to bed to be out of his way, and having hung up stockings by the chimney-piece, that he may fill them with gifts for the children. There he sits, smoking his pipe, and delighting himself with the thought of what he shall leave for the children, and of their joyful surprise in the morning. But we will let our American writer speak after his own fashion of the good Santo Claus.

“ Santo Claus has doffed his cocked hat, and assumed one in unison with the weather. The sign of the saint is stamped on his forehead as the genuine impress of Heaven. He wears his snow-boots and fur-trimmed mantle, which are the very same with which he journeyed over the hills of Holland.

“ Saint Nicholas is smothered with *gooderies*, and is prepared to be very lavish upon those who live in expectancy of presents. The family has retired, the little ones are dreaming most intensely of crammed stockings, which they have hung so as to attract the attention of the saint. We fancy ourselves looking upon the little, short limbs, on tip-toes, straining to place their hose out of the way of rats. Jane can scarcely reach higher than one of these animals; the larger boys and girls have obtained a better position: and one appears to tower above the rest, who, no doubt, has received the friendly aid of the grandfather.

“ The mother has coaxed them off to bed earlier than usual, and saved a ration of gingerbread. Neither tears, words, sobs, nor petulance disturb them now; they know that

the saint visits only good children; and Bobby, Sally, and Peter, find it difficult to hold their tongues. Their mother promises them, even though they have been violent transgressors throughout the year, that for one night's peace she will bribe the saint for them. They fancy they hear the sound of whistles, penny-trumpets, and drums; the cries of dolls, the singing of wooden birds, and the ticking of pewter watches; then boxes of tools are already at work, repairing houses built in the air; and they fairly stagger under the inheritance of a new year. When sound asleep, emblems of innocence and the kingdom of heaven, they are blest with a profusion of presents; the morning dawns, and the family are disturbed by their up-risings. On other mornings it may have been difficult to arouse them, but on the New-Year's, trumpets and drums bring them down, scarcely half awake. John, who is advanced to the age of small lads, takes the lead; he misses his way, or runs against the door; Sally and Mary, aided by the bannisters, come down crying with impatience—the little ones seize their stockings with eagerness, Sally substituting a chair for her grandfather. The day is consumed with comments, eyes sparkle with delight, and the faces of all beam with happiness.

“What would men do if there were no holidays from one year's end to another! They are as necessary as landmarks or resting-places for travellers; and as custom—a good custom, one to be established and perpetuated, a sociable and endearing one—has thrown this in our way, let us cling to it till the journey of life is ended.”

Such are the feelings with which all people relinquish the old year, and await the new. Regrets and gladness are curiously mingled. We all of us cast

One longing, lingering, look behind,
yet advance to meet the coming time as if it were to be

better than all that had gone before. For a moment, in the words of Alfred Tennyson, we

Stand pensively
As one that from a casement leans his head,
When midnight bells cease ringing suddenly,
And the old year is dead.

But the next moment the great spirit of the future—the presentiment of good, that paves all the mysterious way with alacrity, enters into us; and we are no longer repiners over the past, but are aspirants for the exhaustless future. We feel within us the grasp of an immortal nature; and like the same poet in his “Death of the Old Year,” sing to ourselves with serene confidence—

He was full of joke and jest,
But all his merry quips are o'er.
To see him die, across the waste,
His son and heir doth ride post-haste,
But he'll be dead before.
Every one for his own.
The night is starry and cold, my friend,
And the New-Year, blithe and bold, my friend,
Comes up to take his own.

THE END.

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